

'Blissfully happy' Lady Diana to marry Prince of Wales

Months of speculation ended yesterday when Buckingham Palace announced that the Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer were engaged to be married. The wedding will almost certainly take place in Westminster Abbey towards the end of July. Lady Diana, who said she was "delighted,

thrilled, blissfully happy", will move out of her Kensington flat to an undisclosed address and will give up her job as a kindergarten teacher. The Prince is aged 32 and Lady Diana is aged 19, but the couple yesterday dismissed the age gap as unimportant.

Westminster Abbey wedding in late July is expected

By John Witherow

Buckingham Palace ended months of speculation about the romance between the Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer with an announcement yesterday of their engagement to marry.

No date or place has been set for the wedding, but it will almost certainly take place towards the end of July in Westminster Abbey, the traditional setting for such important state occasions and the scene of the coronations of almost all English monarchs since William the Conqueror.

The announcement was made in a brief statement at 11 am: "It is with the greatest pleasure that the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh announce the betrothal of their beloved son, the Prince of Wales, to the Lady Diana Spencer, daughter of the Earl Spencer and the Hon Mrs Shand Kydd."

It was read by Lord Maclean, the Lord Chamberlain, to hundreds of people attending an investiture at the Palace. The Queen smiled broadly as the news was greeted with prolonged applause.

The Cabinet was informed of the decision yesterday morning. Members of the Royal Family, the Prime Minister, Mr Michael Foot, Leader of the Opposition, senior ministers, Commonwealth heads of state and heads of government, and the Archbishop of Canterbury have all been told during the past few days.

Under the Royal Marriages Act, 1772, consent is required under the Great Seal and the Privy Council will meet formally to approve the marriage.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie, interrupting a debate on marriage at the General Synod of the Church of England, announced the engagement to sustained applause.

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The Prime Minister and the Lord Chancellor, Lord Hailsham of St Marylebone, also offered congratulations to the couple in Parliament.

Mrs Margaret Thatcher, who said she would convey the congratulations of the Commons at her audience with the Queen last night, said during Commons question time that the engagement brought "great pleasure" to the Government and MPs.

The engagement put an end to the rumours that have surrounded the relationship. It will also relieve Lady Diana of what was sometimes considered harassment by photographers and reporters, pressure that soured relations between Fleet Street and the Palace.

Lord Spencer, Lady Diana's father, said that her "life had been made very difficult" by the constant attention of the media. "It will be easier now. She will be under some protection, whereas before she had to face the music on her own."

Lady Diana will move out of her flat in Kensington to an address that Buckingham Palace refused to disclose. She will also leave her job as a kindergarten teacher and come under the protection of the Royal Family.

Lord Spencer also disclosed how the Prince of Wales had telephoned him last week to ask his permission "I wonder what he would have said if I had said no", he said.

In an interview with the BBC, the Prince said he was "positively delighted and frankly amazed that Diana is prepared to take me on". Lady Diana said: "I am absolutely delighted; thrilled; blissfully happy."

The Prince proposed to Lady Diana about three weeks ago at a private dinner at Buckingham Palace before she left for a visit to Australia. The Prince said he wanted to give her time to consider her decision, but she accepted "more or less straight away" and he then gave her a handsome sapphire and diamond ring.

The Prince told the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh at Sandringham earlier this month. "It has been very difficult sitting on [the news] for the past three weeks, but we have managed it," the Prince said. According to Buckingham Palace, there was no special



The Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer at Buckingham Palace yesterday.

reason for making the announcement yesterday.

The couple intend to live at the Prince of Wales's still incomplete, furnished country house at Highgrove, Gloucestershire, and to find a suitable home in London. They have not yet decided where to take their honeymoon.

There is a 12-year gap between the couple's ages. The Prince is aged 32 and Lady Diana is aged 19, but they dismissed that as being of no importance.

"It is only 12 years", the Prince said. "Lots of people have got married with that sort of age difference. You are as old as you feel you are. I think Diana will feel me young, apart from anything else... I shall be exhausted."

"She descends five times from Charles II: four times on the wrong side of the blanket, and one on the right side; 26 dukes in England today, five are direct descendants on the wrong side of the blanket of Charles II. Prince Charles does not descend from that King."

The couple may well have met as children at Sandringham, but the first encounter they can recall was in 1977 when the Prince of Wales was invited to shoot at the Spencer home at Althorp, Northamptonshire.

The romance was seen to blossom when Lady Diana visited Balmoral last summer. "We began to realize then that there was something in it," the Prince said.

The announcement was greeted with enthusiasm and delight throughout the country and crowds gathered outside the Palace during the day.

felt about the future, said she found the prospect daunting, but "with Prince Charles beside me I cannot go wrong."

She believed she would enjoy the enormous amount of travel the couple will be expected to undertake. "You get used to travel", the Prince said.

Lady Diana will be the first English bride for a future King of England since 1659 when Prince James, later James II, married Anne Hyde, the eldest daughter of the first Earl of Clarendon.

Mr Harold Brooks-Baker, managing director of Debenhams, said Lady Diana will bring back Stuart blood to the Royal Family.

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and one on the right side; 26 dukes in England today, five are direct descendants on the wrong side of the blanket of Charles II. Prince Charles does not descend from that King."

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British Steel to get £880m more from state

By Peter Hill

The Government is to inject a further £880m into the effectively bankrupt British Steel Corporation over the next 15 months, and is to take powers which would facilitate the virtual closure of the entire business if the latest "survival plan" fails to achieve its objectives.

In addition to the provision of the additional £880m for the final few weeks of the current financial year ending next month and £730m for next year, the Government is introducing legislation which will when enacted, write off £3,500m from the corporation's balance sheet.

Announcing this latest taxpayer assistance to the BSC, Mr Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Industry, stressed that Mr Ian MacGregor, chairman of the corporation, considered the plan optimistic (a view he endorsed), and gave warnings that failure to meet its objectives would lead to further closures, redundancies, disposals and the virtual dismembering of the business.

Mr MacGregor has made it clear to the Government and the managers and workforce of the corporation that there will be no future for any operations that are not competitive, Mr Keith said.

Mr MacGregor's optimism is not justified, further closures and redundancies may be necessary. The Government will monitor progress closely. Mr MacGregor will give his assessment in July.

Sir Keith acknowledged that the sums were substantial, but the Government had recognized that the corporation should be given the last chance to ease the burden on the taxpayer by becoming profitable. The support was being advanced on condition that BSC behaved responsibly towards the private sector steel-makers.

Many of the independent companies, faced with equally grave problems, have laid allegations of unfair pricing policies at the door of the subsidized BSC which they claim is undermining their competitive position.

Yesterday's statement boosts the total funds committed by the Government to BSC to £1,851m. If the external financial limit of £700m for 1979-80, which the Government has said it will not exceed, after taking office is included, total funds committed over three years will amount to £2,551m. This is vastly in excess of

Continued on page 3, col 1

Earthquake hits Greece

Athens, Feb 24.—A violent earthquake hit Athens and most of central Greece tonight, sending panic-stricken people scurrying for safety in city squares and open spaces.

A building in central Athens was said to have collapsed and the electricity supply was cut off in many parts of the city. The main television channel was blacked out. The cities of Patras, Nauplion, Missolonghi and Larissa were also affected by the earthquake.

Mr Reagan to discuss Soviet summit offer with Western leaders

From Patrick Brogan

Washington, Feb 24.—President Reagan said today that he would discuss President Brezhnev's suggestion of a summit with Mrs Thatcher and other allied leaders before reaching a decision. He described the proposal as most interesting.

President Brezhnev suggested the summit in his speech to the Soviet Communist Party Congress in Moscow yesterday. Mr Reagan said: "I was most interested in his suggestion and it is something that now we will discuss."

These discussions will take place in the Administration, at the State Department and in Cabinet, with the Allies and "most particularly" with Mrs Thatcher who is coming to Washington tomorrow and will see the President on Thursday.

Mr Reagan repeated that he was ready to resume negotiations on strategic arms limitation, and added: "I also made it plain to such a negotiating table, if and when this takes place, there should be other considerations, what has been termed by Mr Brezhnev as 'linkage'."

The considered official view on the proposal remains that it is being studied. The President, Mr Alexander Haig, Secretary of State, believe that some exchange of views or for symbolic gestures like signing agreements, already reached. They do not think that summits are useful places to conduct serious negotiations.

A summit is therefore unlikely while there are matters of acute disagreement between the two Governments, such as the El Salvador question.

A further difficulty may be the "Middle East". A State Department spokesman said yesterday that the main issue in that region was not the Palestinians but the continuing deterioration of the Western position. The highest priority should be to arrest that deterioration, and to bring about a peace settlement in the Middle East.

Cool Thatcher response: President Brezhnev's call for a summit with President Reagan and his suggestions for renewed East-West arms talks met with a cool and guarded response from Mrs Margaret Thatcher in the House of Commons yesterday (Hugh Noyes writes from Westminster).

With the Prime Minister flying to Washington for her first meeting with the President, Mr Michael Foot, Labour leader, and Mr David Steel, leader of the Liberal Party, urged her to make a more positive response to Mr Brezhnev's proposals.

But Mrs Thatcher told the House that the best way to improve East-West relations was for the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan. She reminded MPs that there were circumstances in which it would suit the Soviet Union to have an arms race, and a number of Russian SS20s deployed on the ground was way ahead of anything in the West.

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Nearly 10% of labour force out of work

By Melvyn Wadgate

Unemployment continues to rise remorselessly with a recorded increase of 78,500 in the underlying level of adult joblessness between mid-January and mid-February.

This brings the seasonally adjusted unemployment total to 2,311,000, 9.6 per cent of the labour force.

The crude total, including school leavers, and before allowing for seasonal factors, rose by 44,000 to a total of 2,611,000 (10.2 per cent of the labour force).

The underlying total has now risen for 17 consecutive months, with more than one million additional people registered as unemployed during that time.

Yesterday's figures drew a chorus of criticism from unions and Labour opposition leaders. Mr Eric Varley, shadow employment secretary, accused the "guilty men" of the government of being the architects of policies which had led to the latest unemployment figures.

He said the 2.46 million unemployed were the scapegoats for the failure of Mrs Thatcher's economic policies. "The Government's policies are in ruins. The Prime Minister's authority has been undermined. But the 'guilty men' all still had jobs," Mr Varley added.

Mr Len Murray, the TUC general secretary, described the jobless figures as "appalling by any standards". The whole of the North Sea oil

revenues of £4,000m this year were being used to finance the unemployed. "This is the economics of the madhouse," he said. Mr Bruce Millan, shadow Scottish secretary, said the figures for school leavers represented a "tragedy of almost proportionate dimensions to the general secretary of the amalgamated staffs side of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, called the jobless figures a "staggering waste of the country's resources".

The Confederation of British Industry added that the figures showed the need for the Government to reduce industry's costs to meet monthly budgets.

The underlying increase of 78,500 was smaller than the 85,000 rise in the labour force which has seen rises of more than 100,000. Even so, this latest rise is still high by postwar standards. Moreover, the increase in registered unemployment does not provide a full picture of the contraction in the labour market, because some of the jobless do not register and are therefore not recorded in the figures.

Experience suggests that one unemployed person in three does not register. This means that the rise in registered and unregistered jobless over the last year and a half could be 1.5 million.

There are however tentative signs that the rate of increase might be slackening. Apart from the fact that the underlying increase this month is less than last month's, the rate of increase in the last year is less than last year's.

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Water union backs action

Leaders of the water and sewage industry's second largest union approved industrial action if their employers do not improve their pay offer. The water authority in the north-east area affected by the water workers' first unofficial strike told the public there was no cause for immediate alarm, while in Middlesex five managers at Britain's largest pumping station and treatment plant are preparing to take over the work of 300 men.

Whitehall disruption move

Plans to allow for industrial action in the highest echelons of government departments are being drawn up by the Association of First Division Civil Servants, and rule change proposals will be put to its annual meeting in May. The use of the disruption weapon is regarded as "a last resort".

Hope for Iran Britons

Three British missionaries are expected to fly home from Iran today, free for the first time in six months; but their immediate return is thrown into doubt by last-minute equivocation by the Iranian Revolutionary Prosecutor-General. The missionaries are expected to board a flight to Istanbul, Frankfurt and Paris at 9 am GMT.

Polish pledge to Russia

Mr Stanislaw Kania, the Polish Communist Party leader, assured the Soviet Communist Party congress in Moscow that the Polish Communists had the strength and determination to resist the country's current crisis.

Hiroshima holocaust recalled by Pope

Speaking at an open-air Mass in Tokyo, the Pope said that the name Hiroshima should become an international symbol for peace. Recalling the holocaust of the first atomic bomb, the Pontiff said that the words of Christ, "Peace be with you", must become a challenge and "re-echo all the horrors of the final warning". Earlier, the Pope met Emperor Hirohito.

67-nation wildlife talks

Sixty-seven countries and more than 100 wildlife organizations are represented in Delhi at the third conference of signatories to the 1973 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora. The conference will discuss proposals to extend laws or strict controls on animal and plant hunting or collecting.

Shares fraud alleged

A fraud was concocted when the price of shares of the apparently booming London and Counties Securities began to fall, a jury at the Central Criminal Court was told. It was alleged that the fraud, using £5m belonging to a subsidiary, was thought up after a scheme to "rig" share prices failed.

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Classified advertisements: Personal, pages 30, 32; La crème de la crème, 26, 27; Appointments, 30; Courses, 28, 29; Residential property, 29.

Wide praise for King Juan Carlos after rebel troops surrender

From Richard Wigg

Madrid, Feb 24.—What King Juan Carlos called in the critical hours early today these extraordinary circumstances ended for Spain with the surrender just after midnight of Lieutenant-Colonel Antonio Tejero Molina.

Colonel Tejero Molina was the leader of an assault on Parliament by about 200 armed civil guards — which had started 18 hours before.

Tonight Lieutenant-General Jaime Milans del Bosch, who is considered to be the main figure behind yesterday's failed coup, was summoned to Madrid and is thought to have been dismissed from his command, which is based on the Valencia military region.

The 65-year-old General, whose military career began on Franco's side in the Spanish Civil War, was repeatedly telephoned during the rebellion by Colonel Tejero Molina. Their telephone conversations are believed to have been taped.

Earlier nearly 350 MPs, almost the entire membership of the Lower House, emerged to freedom. "Long live democracy," the former Spanish Ambassador to Britain, had said in a broadcast. Colonel Tejero Molina's demand to sit down and shut up.

Other MPs had shouted "democracy, democracy" and had held up copies of the constitution. Senior Fraga was eventually roughly led away.

MPs from several parties were outpoken in their praise of the crucial role that the King played last night. They underlined how he had immediately summoned the Joint Chiefs of Staff into session on hearing that an illegal state of emergency had been declared.

The King had also called upon deputies for the corralled ministers in the Cortes to set up an emergency government machinery.

As one Socialist MP told The Times: "For many generations we have not identified Spain's monarchy with the fate of

liberty. Yet when you see liberty in danger as we all thought it was deeply last night and you then look to the King for a way to save it, there's a very positive fact for Spain's democracy all round."

Many other MPs emphasised how they suspected when the civil guards suddenly entered the chamber that it was a full-scale military coup. Their supporters kept the chamber from outside communications and only read them the communiqué announcing the takeover of civilian authority.

Later a transistor was smuggled in and MPs were able to catch glimpses of the special editions published by Madrid's two leading newspapers. Their headlines revealed that the king was going well for the rebel leaders.

Copies of the extreme right El Alcuzar newspaper were seized by the police early today, apparently because the newspaper was suspected of publishing statements sympathetic to the rebel cause.

King Juan Carlos, who has summoned a meeting of the Spanish Defence Council, had earlier today sent messages to all his regional commanders, expressing his "satisfaction over how the troops had behaved."

Many hours of negotiation were required before the rebel right-wing colonel agreed to surrender his arms. He insisted on doing so with a flourish.

He demanded that he should be allowed to surrender at the Pardo, the disused palace from which Franco had ruled Spain for almost 40 years. In fact the colonel was taken to the Madrid civil guard headquarters and detained along with the men he had commanded.

Ringleader's quote: Colonel Tejero Molina told MPs as they were released: "Go. Don't worry. The only thing happening here is that I'm going to land 30 or 40 years in jail."

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ROYAL ENGAGEMENT

General Synod offers its congratulations on royal engagement

By Clifford Longley
Religious Affairs
Correspondent

The General Synod of the Church of England was in the happy position of being the first to offer its congratulations to the Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer when the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie, interrupted the proceedings yesterday within a few minutes of the official announcement to break the news.

Members applauded loudly when he said: "I am sure the synod will want to express its happiness to his Highness the Prince of Wales and to Lady Diana Spencer. We are greatly encouraged here by the respect with which the marriage bond is held, and by the witness to it in the life of the Royal Family."

His statement came in the course of a debate on the church's policy towards divorce. At an impromptu press conference later the Archbishop added his blessings, saying: "I am delighted with the news and I am honoured to have been invited to take the wedding."

"I am sure that with the present stage of winter and life

in the country, it will be a great fillip for people to share in this happiness."

Dr Runcie said he was looking forward to an opportunity of talking to the couple and "finding out what their ideas about it are". He did not know where or when the marriage would take place.

The Archbishop said he enjoyed conducting marriages and regretted that his work gave him few opportunities to officiate.

Archbishops of Canterbury performed such ceremonies rarely, either on very formal occasions or very privately. Last week, for instance, he had baptized the child of his wife's hairdresser in the chapel at Lambeth Palace.

The last marriage ceremony he had performed, as Bishop of St Albans, had been for a woman who had been a bridesmaid at his own marriage.

He believed in couples coming to discuss marriage with the priest who was to perform the ceremony, and said: "My chief aim in preparing people for marriage is to establish such a relationship that they feel free to raise questions themselves; subsequently I feel a bond with those that I marry. Any good priest is bound to do so."

Abbey ceremony in the family tradition

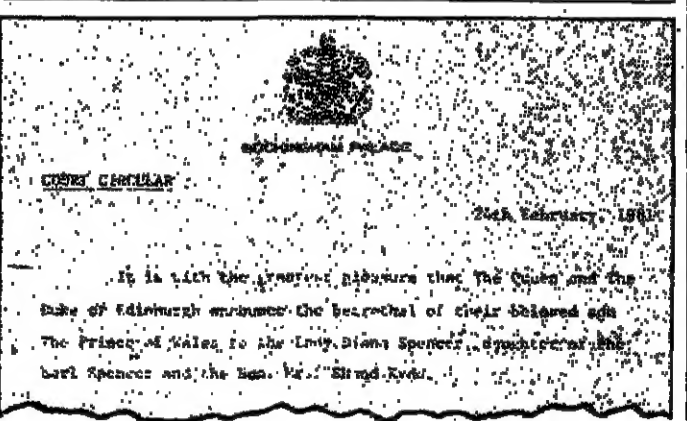
By Lucy Hodges

The marriage of the Prince of Wales to Lady Diana Spencer is expected to take place in Westminster Abbey towards the end of July, and if previous royal marriages are anything to go by it will be a grand occasion.

Both sets of parents were married in Westminster Abbey, the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh in 1947 and Lady Diana's parents, who are now divorced, in 1954.

The Queen's marriage was a splendid event despite being soon after the Second World War. Rationing was still in force and Americans sent food parcels as a wedding gift to be distributed to widows. That ceremony was attended by foreign kings, queens, princes and leaders of the nation and empire.

It was reported by *The Times* that it was a ceremony of splendour, dignity and colour. People camped out on the pavements the night before to ensure good views of the processions. Buckingham Palace was flooded and the Royal Family made frequent appearances on the balcony to wave at cheering crowds.



Cut-out from yesterday's Court Circular.

Timing 'a deliberate distraction'

By George Clark

Political Correspondent

While Mrs Margaret Thatcher and most MPs all parties joined in sending congratulations and good wishes to the Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer on their engagement, some Labour MPs suspected that the timing of the announcement was the result of connivance between Buckingham Palace and the Government to distract attention from the latest increase in the unemployment figures, which put the total number out of work at 2,436,294.

That was not the official party view. Indeed, Lord Peart, leader of the opposition peers, referred in the House of Lords to "this happy news" and proffered the warmest congratulations of his colleagues.

In the Commons there was not the same opportunity for formal congratulations, but there were loud cheers from all quarters of the House when during question time, the Prime Minister said that, at the audience of the Queen which she hoped to have later, she would express "the great pleasure which the news of the Prince of Wales's engagement has brought to the Government and to the House as a whole".

In the Lords Lord Hailsham of St Marylebone, the Lord Chancellor, said: "The House will wish to have an opportunity in due course to convey a more formal message to her Majesty the Queen."

Lord Byers, leader of the Liberal peers, said they wanted to be associated in full with the congratulations and good wishes.

Lady Hylton-Foster, for the independent peers, said: "This is an exception when the cross-bench peers would also like to associate with the good wishes and congratulations from this House on the happy occasion of this engagement."

From the bishops' bench the Bishop of Salisbury said: "We

shall continue to pray that God's guidance and his riches will attend Prince Charles and Lady Diana to the end of their days."

Mr William Hamilton, Labour MP for Fife, Central, and a persistent critic of the extravagance of the Royal Family, said: "I think there has been connivance, through Conservative Party agencies, between the palace and 10 Downing Street to deliberately distract attention from the latest unemployment figures, almost the worst for this century."

During the next few months we shall have further distractions from the results of the Government's disastrous policies as the celebrations get under way. There will be no question of a 6 per cent restriction, or worry about the impact on the public sector borrowing requirement.

The sky will be the limit. And the British people deferential as always, will wallow in it.

"The winter of discontent is now being replaced by the winter of phony romance, with the active connivance of the Government."

Mr Hamilton said that nobody should be surprised that the palace statement coincided with the declaration of the unemployment figures and the announcement about the rundown of the steel industry.

"That is how the Establishment works and how we expect it to work," he said.

Referring to Prince Charles's future income, he said: "As an individual, he should live on his own sweat."

Mr Hamilton recalled that a House of Commons committee had recommended that provision be made for the possibility of Prince Charles's marriage and that there should be a pension of £50,000 a year if he left a widow.

"Now the prospect is a little bit nearer, that £50,000, which we decided upon in the early 1970s, must be revised upwards."

I should think the amount would be £150,000 at least for the prospective widow now", Mr Hamilton said.

Lord Spencer tells how the Prince of Wales asked for his permission by telephone

The proud father joins the crowds outside the palace

By Richard Ford

Lady Diana Spencer's ebullient father stood among crowds outside Buckingham Palace yesterday and spoke of a telephone call from the Prince of Wales asking for permission to marry his daughter.

Even then, the Prince's well known sense of humour was evident. Lord Spencer said: "The Prince said: 'Can I marry your daughter? I have asked her and very surprisingly, she said yes.' I told him 'Well done' and said I was delighted for the two of them."

Lord Spencer, wearing a red carnation in the buttonhole of his navy blue suit, was bursting with pride as he sang the praises of his daughter, while inside, she and the Prince posed for photographers. The Prince and Lady Diana had been at Highgrove, the Prince's home in Gloucestershire, when they made the telephone call to him last week.

"She loves it all right. There is no doubt about it. She

is a giver, not a taker, and that is very rare these days. I think Charles is very lucky to have her", Lord Spencer said.

He had come to Buckingham Palace to see the excitement and crowds. The previous night he and his wife, Raine, the daughter of Miss Barbara Cartland, the novelist, had gone to the palace and spent an hour and a half with the Prince and Lady Diana. They were shown the sapphire and diamond engagement ring.

"It is a lovely ring, a beautiful sapphire. When I saw Diana last night she was looking radiant and very happy."

"I have come to the palace to get my own back by photographing all the photographers. I have photographed that every event in her life and now I am photographing this one."

As crowds congratulated him, he photographed the camera-men taking pictures of him. He talked proudly of how his daughter had handled herself during the last few months.

Later he was joined by his wife and with her son, Henry, aged 12, they posed for photographers.

Lady Spencer, Lady Diana's stepmother, said: "We are very happy and enormously proud of Diana because she has taken on enormous responsibilities." During the last three months they had many conversations with her about the onerous tasks of the future. "She was sweet enough to confide in us, but of course we will not break her confidence. She has been to us a lot since Christmas as we tried to provide a refuge from all the personal problems. She had to think over a very momentous decision."

She had guessed that Lady Diana was in love with the Prince earlier this year. But she and her husband had found it difficult to keep it secret, and had been allowed to tell godparents, relations and close family friends only on Monday night.

Her step-daughter was a very thorough, but through their persistence had "rather

the sort to get depressed." She was terribly anxious to do the right thing, not to say too much or do the wrong thing."

Lord Spencer said that in the past six months Lady Diana had grown up a lot, particularly because of the pressure of press and television interest. She had handled herself very well and the press liked her.

"Up to now she has been under tremendous pressure. But she will have a little protection from now on. It is a relief now and I am thankful for Diana. She was unprotected but she has proved herself, hasn't she? She has grown through it with flying colours."

She had often had difficulty when she went to work, and a lot of people, including himself, would have found that kind of pressure intolerable at the age of 19. But he said the Queen had admired the way his daughter had handled herself.

The press had a job to be very thorough, but through their persistence had "rather

made Diana's life difficult", but he now thought she was over the worst. She is obviously a very remarkable girl and I am very proud to be her father. She never breaks down, because Diana does not break down at all. It never got her down at all. She had great courage and resilience."

Lord Spencer said as he got into his bronze Rolls-Royce that the marriage would be in July, although a place had not yet been fixed. "We are looking forward to the day. We hope it is fine weather, although, knowing us, it will rain."

Asked what Lady Diana's plans were in the immediate future, he said she "will spend a lot of time, if she can, with Prince Charles, as she is what she wants to do. She wants to be beside him and with him now."

"She will do the job ahead very well. She loves Prince Charles, and Diana wants to give of herself, and I am sure she will. She is a wonderful girl."



Lord Spencer, Lady Diana's father, and his second wife talking to the press

World welcomes the announcement

Mr Malcolm Fraser, the

Australian Prime Minister, announced the engagement of the Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer in Parliament in Canberra only minutes after it was released by Buckingham Palace.

He welcomed the news and said later that he expected to attend the wedding.

Cardinal Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, said in a telegram to the palace that the Roman Catholic community "offers loyal best wishes, congratulations and prayers for their happiness."

Dr William B. Johnston, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, said the church had heard the news "with great joy."

Lieutenant Roy Clare, Commanding Officer of the Prince's old ship, HMS *Brooklyn*, also sent a congratulatory message. Yesterday the Prince visited his old shipmates and spent a day at sea in the Solent with them.

Councillor John Edwards, the Lord Mayor of Cardiff, said: "I am sure everyone in Wales will be thrilled by the announcement and all of us are eagerly looking forward to the

very special occasion of the wedding."

Barbara Cartland, the novelist, whose daughter is Lady Diana's stepmother, said: "I am so delighted that the Prince should have someone so charming and suitable to share his very exciting life. Like millions of people the world over I wish them great happiness together."

Mrs Camilla Parker Bowles, a long-time friend of the Prince, said: "I am delighted. It was what we all hoped for. I think Lady Diana is just right for the job."

There was delight too in Doughton, near Tebury, the Cotswold town where the Prince has his Georgian mansion house, and at Sandringham, the birthplace of Lady Diana.

Mrs Diana Fitz-Savage of Sandringham, who was Lady Diana's next-door neighbour, said: "She will make a marvellous Queen. We are thrilled."

Mr David Steel, leader of the Liberal Party, said: "On behalf of the whole Liberal Party I send warmest congratulations and good wishes to Prince Charles and Lady Diana."

Gift makers ready to cash in

By David Hewson
Business News Staff

While the news of the royal engagement may have come as something of a relief to most of the country, to the Midlands it is likely to prove a godsend. Jewellery and silverware companies, whose sales have been falling in recent months, expect the wedding to provide a respite for the recession.

Almost every company in the retail gift market, from pottery giants such as Wedgwood to small-scale engravers, has been planning to enter the commemorative market during the past few months, although often with a different emphasis on those who might be involved.

Wedgwood has been working on designs for its range of commemorative items costing between £2 and £2,000 but it had been defending a decision until an official announcement. The Coventry textiles firm of J & J Cash, however, has almost completed the design for its commemorative bookmark costing £2.75, complete, that is, apart from the face of the woman alongside the Prince of Wales.

Mr Gordon Wright, Wedgwood's publicity director, said: "I think every manufacturer, including Wedgwood, has had something planned ever since the first rumour came out that he was going to get married. Lady Diana appears to be the first serious."

H. Quibell & Sons, the Birmingham silversmiths, will be making silver-plated commemorative plates retailing at about £50 and featuring portraits of the couple. But Mr Neville Harry, the company's proprietor, has had some difficulties in producing a portrait of Lady Diana.

"The picture of Prince Charles is easy but it is very difficult to get a likeness of Lady Diana", Mr Harry, whose most recent task was producing two gold-plated sinks for a Jersey businessman, said.

Prince ends 300-year tradition

It is more than 300 years since the heir to the throne has married an English woman. The Queen Mother was Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, daughter of the Scottish Earl of Strathmore, when she married the future George VI in 1923; for centuries before that the heir had taken a foreign bride.

George VI married Princess Mary, daughter of the German Duke of Teck, and his predecessor, Edward VII, married a Danish girl, Queen Alexandra. Queen Victoria married a German, Prince Albert, and all her Hanoverian ancestors back to George I in 1714 married German princesses.

Before him, Queen Anne married the son of the King of Denmark and her predecessor, Queen Mary II, married William of Orange, who was only a quarter English.

The last English bride was in 1659, when William's predecessor, then Prince James and later King James II, married Lady Anne Hyde, elder daughter of the First Earl of Clarendon.

English brides before her had included four of the wives of Henry VIII, more than a century earlier.

Younger fashion house to make wedding dress

By St. ay Menkes
Fashion Editor

A British-designed wedding dress from one of the younger fashion houses will be Lady Diana Spencer's choice for her summer wedding.

Lady Diana, who favours a casual, sporty style of dress, will need a completely different wardrobe to cope with her new role in public life. She has previously selected outfits from the Kensington Palace house of Belville Sassoon, although Lady Spencer, her stepmother, dresses almost exclusively from the traditional royal houses of Hardy Amies and Norman Hartnell.

The ivory satin dress, with its lavishly embroidered flowers in crystal and seed pearls, made by the late Sir Norman Hartnell for Princess Elizabeth was always considered a most fitting bridal gown for the Queen.

This season's wedding dress at Hartnell, designed by Anette Harvey, is in moiré tulle and silk georgette.

A full-length gown of white spotted organza is offered by Ken Fletwood, Hardy Amies's designer. His scalloped skirt is embroidered with flowers. David Sassoon also chose embroidered organza for his off-the-shoulder dress with lace neckline, full flared sleeves and wide satin sash.

The sweeping crinoline skirt has been in fashion for royalty since Queen Victoria walked down the aisle of the Chapel Royal at St James's Palace in 1840. The dress, of ivory satin trimmed with Honiton lace (in order to encourage the waning Devon lace industry).

Norman Hartnell designed Princess Margaret's organdie dress, cut in 14 sections and worn by her under skirts of tulle. Elizabeth and David Emmanuel, the designers whose extravagant evening gowns are

much favoured by Princess Michael and the Duchess of Kent, last week showed their crinoline of paper tulle and narrow waist.

Gina Fratini, whose romantically pretty dresses were short-listed by Princess Anne before she selected a dress by Maureen Baker, is another possible candidate for the royal wedding dress, as are Ian Thomas, the Queen's personal favourite, and the designer, Julia Forsyth. Offer of lace. Lace-makers in Nottingham are writing to Buckingham Palace to ask if Lady Diana Spencer will accept a gift of lace for her wedding dress (our Nottingham Correspondent writes).

Mr Ronald Walton, director of the British Lace Federation, based in Nottingham, said yesterday that it was a tradition that part of the dress for a royal wedding was made from local lace.



The engagement ring, a sapphire in a diamond surround.

Flatmates kept the secret

The two girls who share a flat with Lady Diana are delighted at the news of the engagement.

Miss Carolyn Price, aged 19, and Miss Virginia Pittman, aged 21, heard the news early this month when Lady Diana returned to the flat in Colbourne Court, Old Brompton Road, London.

Miss Price, who went to school with Lady Diana, said: "We never dreamed of telling anyone. We were determined to keep it a secret. We were all so thrilled that we celebrated breakfast the next day."

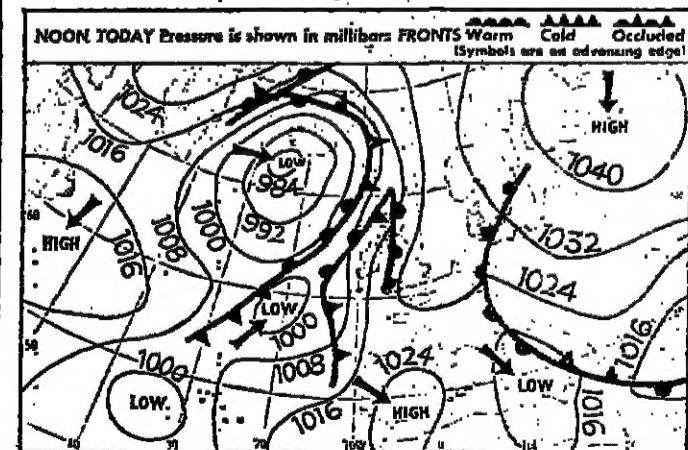
Miss Pittman said Lady Diana just got on the bed next to her and said she was going to marry the Prince.

"She had a big smile on her face. And then we all began to cry with happiness."

Among the crowds there was almost unanimous approval of Lady Diana. For her father, Lord Spencer, who stood unrecognized listening and watching, it was perhaps a time for private reflection that she is now public property.

By last night the crowd outside Buckingham Palace had dwindled to small groups. As they waited Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother was in a private dining party at Clarence House for the Prince of Wales and his fiancée.

Weather forecast and recordings



Today
Sun rises: 6.55 am
Moon sets: 9.46 am
Sun sets: 5.34 pm
Moon rises: 12.33 am tomorrow
Last quarter: February 27
Lightning up: 6.4 pm to 6.23 am
High water: London Bridge, 5.29 am, 6.5m; 5.53 pm, 6.5m; Avonmouth, 10.38 am, 11.5m; 10.52 pm, 11.0m; Dover, 2.33 am, 5.1m; 2.51 pm, 5.7m; Hull, 9.23 am, 6.5m; 10.13 pm, 6.5m; Liverpool, 2.45 am, 8.1m; 2.56 pm, 8.0m; 11.0 am, 3.048m 1m=3.2808ft
A ridge of high pressure will persist in S: a frontal trough, will cross N areas.
Forecasts for 6 am to midnight:
London, SE, England, East Anglia: Variable cloud, occasional light showers, perhaps fog early; wind mostly NE, light; maximum temp 2° or 3° C (36° to 37° F); frost early and late.
Central S, central N, E, NE England, Midlands: Mostly dry, mist and freezing fog patches, slowly thinning to give some hazy sunshine; wind variable, later SE (37° to 39° F); frost early and late.
Channel Islands, SW, NW England, Wales: Mostly dry, variable cloud, perhaps patchy freezing fog early; wind SE, light, increasing to moderate; max temp 4° to 5° C (43° to 45° F); frost early and late.
Lake District, Isle of Man, Borders, Edinburgh and Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth: Mostly dry, perhaps a little sleet or snow at times, chiefly on hills, rather cloudy; wind S, fresh to strong; max temp 5° C (41° F).
Central Highlands: Outbreaks of snow turning to rain, moderate accumulations with drifting; wind S, strong, perhaps gale; max temp 5° C (41° F).
N Ireland: Mostly cloudy with rain or drizzle at times; wind S, fresh or strong; max temp 7° C (45° F).
Sea passages: S North Sea, Straits of Dover, English Channel
WEATHER REPORTS YESTERDAY MIDDAY: c, cloud; d, drizzle; f, fair; s, sun; n, snow; t, thunder.

Watching crowd in celebratory mood

By a Staff Reporter

Outside Buckingham Palace yesterday, where the British have so often shown their spontaneous affection for the Royal Family, crowds quickly gathered in celebratory mood to try to catch a glimpse of the Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer.

In spite of freezing weather, 3,000 people, among them many tourists, were watching the changing of the guard when official confirmation that the engagement had been announced swept through the crowd.

Shortly afterwards, as cold faces pressed up against the railings of the palace, a band of the Coldstream Guards struck up "Congratulations."

Among the tourists, many were unaware that the royal romance had now been officially coupled and they were bewildered by the journalists and cameramen who stood huddled in groups by one of the entrances to the palace forecourt.

On the Victoria Monument, affectionately known to journalists as "the wedding cake", a battery of telephoto lenses were trained on the balcony of the palace in the hope that the newly engaged couple would make an appearance to acknowledge the cheers of the crowd.

The crowd was swelled by many schoolchildren on half-term holiday and the warm weather from many people was that yesterday's announcement had come at the right time. It clearly reflected the popular view that the Prince of Wales had waited quite long enough before settling down.

Queen Elizabeth, from Balldon, Bradford, said she had been a little surprised, as Lady Diana was very young. However, there was general conviction that despite her relative youth Lady Diana is the right choice for the Prince.

Miss E. Donnelly, a secretary from Clapham, who had travelled from her home to join the crowd after hearing the news, said: "It is about time. After all, the prince is 23. But I'm very pleased about it." But I'm very pleased about it. Many others mentioned that she thought Lady Diana had had a background like Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, and that that would be good for the Royal Family. "I think it is a good idea to have some new blood into a family once in a while," she said.

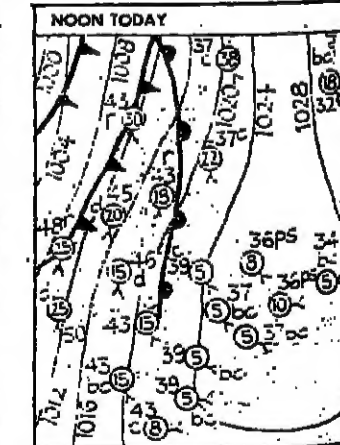
Inside the palace people attending an investiture had cause for a double celebration as they, according to one of them, reflected the privilege of seeing the Queen so soon after the announcement.

Councillor John Bradley, of Halifax, said the Lord Chamberlain made the official announcement to the recipients of honours in the afternoon.

Mr Ronald Greenwood, the England football team manager, said as he left the palace: "It was a lovely occasion to be involved in it. It made it a double celebration to be here on this particular day."

Among the crowds there was almost unanimous approval of Lady Diana. For her father, Lord Spencer, who stood unrecognized listening and watching, it was perhaps a time for private reflection that she is now public property. By last night the crowd outside Buckingham Palace had dwindled to small groups. As they waited Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother was in a private dining party at Clarence House for the Prince of Wales and his fiancée.

Yesterday
London: Temp: max 6 am to 6 pm, 4° C (39° F); min 6 pm to 6 am, 0° C (32° F). Humidity, 6 pm, 76 per cent. Rain, 24 hr to 6 pm, 3.1 mm. Wind, S, fresh to strong; 1.027.4 millibars, rising, 1.000 millibars=29.53in.



Overseas selling prices
Australia \$2.45; Argentina \$2.00; Brazil \$2.00; Canada \$1.00; Chile \$1.00; Colombia \$1.00; Costa Rica \$1.00; Cuba \$1.00; Denmark \$1.00; Ecuador \$1.00; Egypt \$1.00; Finland \$1.00; France \$1.00; Germany \$1.00; Greece \$1.00; Hong Kong \$1.00; India \$1.00; Indonesia \$1.00; Italy \$1.00; Japan \$1.00; Korea \$1.00; Kuwait \$1.00; Laos \$1.00; Lebanon \$1.00; Liberia \$1.00; Luxembourg \$1.00; Malaysia \$1.00; Mexico \$1.00; Monaco \$1.00; Morocco \$1.00; Netherlands \$1.00; New Zealand \$1.00; Norway \$1.00; Pakistan \$1.00; Panama \$1.00; Paraguay \$1.00; Peru \$1.00; Philippines \$1.00; Portugal \$1.00; Qatar \$1.00; Romania \$1.00; Saudi Arabia \$1.00; Singapore \$1.00; South Africa \$1.00; Spain \$1.00; Sri Lanka \$1.00; Sweden \$1.00; Switzerland \$1.00; Taiwan \$1.00; Thailand \$1.00; Trinidad \$1.00; Turkey \$1.00; Uganda \$1.00; United Kingdom \$1.00; United States \$1.00; Uruguay \$1.00; Venezuela \$1.00; Yugoslavia \$1.00.

HOME NEWS

Water union leaders approve industrial action, but hope for last-minute improved offer

By David Felton
Labour Reporter

Leaders of the second largest union in the water and sewerage industry gave approval yesterday for their members to take industrial action, if there is no improvement in the employers' "final" offer of a pay rise of 10 per cent.

The decision of the executive of the National Union of Public Employees, which has about 10,000 members in the industry, was announced shortly before a hastily arranged meeting of the employers started to consider whether to increase the offer to avoid the industrial action that union leaders believe is inevitable.

The National Water Council members of the industry's negotiating council were due to meet today after the four unions had met to consider the demands for a strike by most of the workforce of 32,000 in

England and Wales. But the meeting was brought forward to review the situation, a council official said last night.

Union leaders were standing by for a call from Sir Robert Marshall, chairman of the water council, to indicate that an improvement could be made to the offer.

Water council officials have made clear during the past three weeks, as it became apparent from votes by water workers at meetings around the country that there was a growing demand for industrial action, that the threat of a national strike would not lead to an improved offer.

Last night, however, union officials were cautiously optimistic that the council's decision to bring forward the meeting might mean a softening of its attitude.

If there is no improved offer, the unions are expected to give

a few days' notice of strike action, which in the first instance could be selective. Yesterday's decision by the NUPES executive gave its officials authority to coordinate industrial action.

Meanwhile, unofficial action continued in several areas, with workers in Lancashire being the first to strike. NUPES has given official backing to a work-to-rule and overtime ban imposed in West Wales and Gwent.

British Gas made a slightly improved pay offer last night to its 42,000 manual workers that would take increases to between 9.1 and 10.2 per cent.

The offer was rejected by union leaders, who will consult their members. They will, however, obviously await the outcome of the water negotiations, because informal pay links have been forged between the two industries.

Letters, page 17

Managers prepare to man pumps

Our Labour Staff

Five senior managers at Britain's largest water pumping station and treatment plant are leaving plans to take over a work of 300 men in an effort to maintain supplies to a large part of London if there is a strike in the industry.

Manual workers at the Hampton plant, Middlesbrough, have decided that if their union leaders go on strike at a meeting today, they will walk out. But several officers expressed reservations about the effects of industrial action could have on the public.

Most of the men are members of the General and Municipal Workers Union, and their strike at least in the early stages of the dispute, would be done by Mr Ted Leon, the senior resident engineer, his deputy and three night station engineers, as would have to work 12 shifts as they try to keep pumping and cleansing chimneys operating.

Since the strike has started, the pressure would be used to minimize the risk of burst mains, which would

be left unrepaired. Mr Wilson said yesterday that it could be started to run dry or supplies became impure, but a breakdown in equipment could hasten a dangerous situation.

The station, which pumps about 13 million gallons a day, also feeds reservoirs. Should the reservoirs start to run dry, water tankers, probably driven by troops, would deliver water to residential areas.

With the approach of spring, the weather could affect the purification beds, where weeds will grow unchecked without the manual workers to do maintenance work. This water authorities would also be unable to deal with emergency calls, because the emergency gangs are members of the unions.

Both management and manual workers at Hampton said that maintaining supplies to hospitals and kidney patients would be paramount. But because of the sophisticated nature of the industry and because there has never been a national dispute, no one is sure whether that is possible.

The plight of kidney patients strikes a particular chord with Mr Clifford Baker, a labourer at Hampton, whose wife died of kidney disease. "I think I would probably come out on strike, but it would make me extremely sad. I might consider getting out of the industry altogether," he said.

The National Union of Public Employees has a few members at the plant, and he said that the unions there had never been militant. They had cooperated with the introduction of new machinery, which had meant a reduction in jobs.

The modernization of the works will be taken a step further when the steam-powered pumps are replaced by electric pumps, which will lead to further job cuts.

Mr Edward Riggs, a labourer and GMWU shop steward, said the unions had been forced into considering industrial action because the 10 per cent offer was not good enough. His present weekly earnings after tax and other deductions were £77

Sewage in streets would speed settlement

By Peter Hennessy

The prospect of sewage in the streets is a politician's nightmare, one of the most vivid indications that the Government has lost the capability to govern. With the imminent prospect of Britain's first national water strike, that spectre is haunting the Cabinet and its committees charged with planning for industrial emergencies, the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU).

The Government's contingency plan for water, revised in the light of experience of local and official action in Lancashire, Greater Manchester and South Yorkshire in 1979, is untested and is the subject of considerable scepticism among the best informed insiders.

One source of relief among veteran contingency planners, however, is that the Government has abandoned the idea, for a national water strike at least, of appealing for civilian volunteers to replace striking workers and work alongside the Armed Forces in the manner of the general strike of 1926, should a state of emergency be declared.

Disruption of supplies would not cause instant and widespread health hazards or seeping of sewage through manholes covers because much depends on whether the strikers start by going for industrial supplies alone or attack domestic supplies first, and on other factors like rainfall filling up storage tanks at sewage works more quickly than usual, but the most seasoned planners are convinced that the Government would have to settle the strike in days rather than weeks.

A local, unofficial stoppage is manageable, but a national official dispute is not. That is particularly true if, as is the case in the present negotiations, supervisory staff, members of the National and Local Government Officers Association, make it clear in advance that they will not guide or assist the naval technicians and personnel from the Royal Engineers and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers who, under the CCU plan, will be



Pickets of the General and Municipal Workers Union outside the North West Water Authority's works in Foxenton Lane, Oldham, yesterday.

drafted into treatment plants and pumping stations.

A few days of widespread disruption of domestic water supplies and an increasingly dirty, irritable and fearful citizenry putting pressure on Parliament and Government to do something, with an equivalent outpouring of venom towards pickets encircling pumping stations and treatment plants, would probably concentrate the minds of both sides wonderfully, and assist in achieving a swift resolution of the dispute.

The CCU's plan is realistic in its intention to buy extra time for negotiations and to relieve pockets of severe civil distress by using army treatment units to decontaminate supplies and mobile tankers to haul water from clean areas into dirty ones once sewage has back-siphoned or untreated effluent has been drawn from rivers into mains supply intakes downstream of sewage stations that have stopped working.

Volunteers from bodies such as the Women's Royal Voluntary Service could be used un-

der local authority supervision to help the aged, infirm and housebound by carrying water from military bowers into homes.

The CCU put the finishing touches last month to a set of regulations that would be introduced after Mr William Whitelaw, the Home Secretary, had secured parliamentary approval for the declaration of a state of emergency under the Emergency Powers Act, 1920 that

approval is needed by the Government if the Armed Forces are to be ordered to commandeer water authority equipment.

In industrial relations terms the breaking point for the water authorities is the chlorination, or disinfection, of drinking supplies. Within 48 hours of a total stoppage, health hazard could become a real danger in some areas even if troops were deployed.

Other safeguards are built into the procedure. The executive will be obliged to consult branch chairmen and secretaries before recommending any form of disruption and if a strike of less than a day is involved a ballot will be held "if circumstances permit".

Political strikes will not be entertained.

Industrial action move: Leaders of 530,000 white-collar civil servants will resolve tomorrow to give notice of official industrial action to the Government after returns from Whitehall's biggest union showing a majority of more than two to one in favour of a strike campaign (Our Labour Staff writes).

The Council of Civil Service Unions will take the formal step at its meeting of approving the campaign after the rejection on Monday of a 7 per cent pay offer.

The resolution approved yesterday by the union's major policy committee specifies a one-day stoppage of all non-industrial civil servants on March 9.

Strike option move by senior civil servants

By Paul Rundle
Labour Editor

The top civil servants' union is drawing up plans to allow for industrial action in May will permit the union's executive committee to recommend action "if other steps for resolving differences have been exhausted or are inappropriate in the circumstances".

But the use of such action is regarded as "a last resort" and individual members will be free to reject a strike recommendation and follow their consciences and the ethical requirements of their professions.

Under the proposed changes, the union's executive will have to hold a ballot before calling for industrial action that involves the complete withdrawal of labour for more than one day, whether by all or part of the 12,000 membership.

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Sir Keith fails to lift steel industry loom with 'last chance' warning

Hugh Noyes
Parliamentary Correspondent

Sir Keith Joseph, the Conservative Minister who went before the House of Commons yesterday, in the aim of boosting the morale of the British Steel Corporation and its workforce, would not wish to see them genuinely gloomy mood.

Mr Ian MacGregor, the corporation's dynamic new chairman, brought from across the Atlantic to save the ailing giant, did seem to be on a hiding to nothing. If his corporate success and the industry's profitability, the Prime Minister told MPs, the Government could denationalize it and it to the private sector.

The plan failed, and the Secretary of State for Industry had to think that was very much on the cards, there would be further closures and redundancies.

In addition to the general discomfiture of everyone in the industry, Sir Keith announced a "last night" that would be an extensive rundown to corporation, if that proves necessary, and would ease transfer of businesses to private sector.

He went on to tell the House Mr MacGregor admitted

his rescue was optimistic, and he was inclined to agree with that. According to the chairman, the corporation was bankrupt by all normal commercial criteria, but since it was a statutory body it could not be liquidated like a private sector company.

Emphasizing that this was the industry's last chance, the Secretary of State added ominously that although the Government might be having to spend taxpayers' money on this occasion, powers were being sought to relieve the taxpayer of the inescapable obligation to fund the corporation indefinitely.

All of that, of course, went down like a lead balloon with Mr Stanley Orme, Opposition spokesman on industry, and his brothers on the Labour back benches.

Mr Orme huffed and puffed magnificently but it was soon clear that Sir Keith's purpose yesterday was not to raise the morale of those in the steel industry but even to placate the seething hordes on the other side of the House.

Of far greater concern to the Government were the seething hordes on the Tory back benches, already roaring with

anger over the cave-in to the miners and the handouts to British Leyland.

If Sir Keith had come before them with more massive sums for steel without balancing that with a heavy dose of gloom and much talk of denationalization, he could well have been carried headless from the Chamber.

United welcome: Steel union leaders last night welcomed the financial reconstruction of their industry, but insisted that many millions more would be needed from the Government if the Corporation was not put on an equal footing with European competitors (Our Labour Editor writes).

Mr William Sims, general secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, asked: "When is the money going? Again, chiefly for interest payments, redundancy payments and the purchase of pieces of private sector companies?"

He applauded the Cabinet's decision to wipe off some of the corporation's long-term debt but argued that the move came rather late. Most European nations had been through that exercise.

Parliamentary report, page 9
Leading article, page 17
State subsidies, page 23

Further cash injection for British Steel

Continued from page 1

Sir Keith ever dreamed it would have been necessary, and admitted at a press conference last night that even with latest assistance "there can be no certainty" that it will be in achieving BSC's active of reaching a financial breakeven point in the 1983 financial year.

The Government has sought to lay the fears of the private or steel makers. But it urged last night that Conservative backbenchers will seek amendments to the new Iron Steel Bill which will substantially toughen its provisions.

Sir Keith defended his position not to advance

subsidies to private sector companies: "That is not a route which makes much sense. This Government wants to reduce subsidies not to increase them", he said.

But Mr Michael Grylls, chairman of the Conservative Industry Committee, said that Tory backbenchers would attempt to introduce amendments to the Bill and also insist on the incorporation of clear powers to effect the liquidation of BSC if the survival plan failed.

Mr MacGregor will consider placing those businesses which are in competition with the private sector, into separate Companies Act companies. This would encompass steel stock-

holding activities and other downstream operations, and would be additional to attempts being made to establish joint venture operations with private sector steelmakers in areas where they overlap. Once concluded they will embrace between 15-25 per cent of BSC's existing business.

Closure and redundancy costs in the current year will swallow up an estimated £300m, falling to about £180m next year. The BSC is planning a modest level of investment for next year of about £200m.

But the degree of uncertainty about the future is reflected by its own forecasts.

The steel trap, page 16

Estimates by Whitehall of adequate

senior Treasury official admitted last night that the financial estimates of government spending presented to Whitehall last night to contain the information Parliament

Michael Bridgeman, secretary in charge of the Treasury's general expenditure, told the Commons Select Committee on Procedure yesterday, under questioning by Mr John Garrett, Labour MP for Norwich, South: "I do certainly agree that the figures have their shortcomings."

He told Mr Enoch Powell, Conservative MP for South: "It is far from clear whether they in fact contain the right information for Parliament."

Earlier, he said that shifting financial year to coincide with the calendar year to enable Parliament to examine more effectively did mean an upheaval.

Fraud concocted as shares began to fall, court told

A fraud of breath-taking magnitude was concocted when the price of shares of the apparently booming London and Counties Securities, a City company, began to fall, a jury at the Central Criminal Court was told yesterday.

Mr David Smout, for the prosecution, said the fraud, using £5m belonging to a subsidiary, a bank called London and Counties, was a scheme to rig share prices and keep them artificially high.

The group was under the chairmanship of Gerald Caplan, who was not in the dock but was assisted by one of the five defendants, Arthur Pepperell, aged 53, he said.

Between June, 1972, and August, 1973, another subsidiary, London and Counties (Foreign), was involved in mopping up available group shares


so that a false price could be created and maintained.

That was "down to the knowledge" of Mr Pepperell and the other defendants, Woolf Parry, aged 58, Brian McMenamy, aged 40, Brian Kendall, aged 47, and Ian Green, aged 43.

Mr Parry, of Highwood Hill, Mill Hill, London; Mr McMenamy, of Highwood Drive, Orpington, Kent; Mr Kendall, of Stag Green Avenue, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, and Mr Green, of Baxendale, Wharfedale, London, deny conspiring with Mr Caplan and Mr Pepperell to defraud by creating a false market price in ordinary shares of London and Counties Securities.

Mr Pepperell and Mr Green deny theft and Mr Pepperell denies further theft charges, falsifying a document, uttering a forged letter, and dishonestly obtaining the reduction of a debt.

The trial continues today.



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HOME NEWS

Union leaders threaten industrial force to influence ministers

By Paul Routledge
Labour Editor

The Government was warned last night that the threat of the use of industrial force on the model of last week's successful miners' strike would inevitably grow unless ministers adopted policies more acceptable to the unions.

Trade union leaders met Sir Geoffrey Howe, Chancellor of the Exchequer, for more than an hour to press their arguments for a £6,200m publicly funded stimulus to the economy in the forthcoming Budget.

Mr David Bassett, chairman of the TUC economic committee, told the Treasury ministerial team and Mr James Prior, Secretary of State for Employment, that they did not appear to grasp the scale and speed with which the economy was being eroded. He insisted that the slump showed no sign of ending.

"The TUC welcomes the belated sign of flexibility displayed by the Government last week over the serious problems of the mining industry," he added.

"There is joy in heaven over the sinner that repenteth. But does the repentance go far enough and was it induced by right motives?"

"If we cannot hope for change by mutual discussion and a willingness by the Government to listen without the application of industrial force, then the threat and the use of such force will inevitably follow."

That was not a choice the unions welcomed, Mr Bassett

went on. "Industrial action means further hardship for our members save for the community. We have to ask ourselves, however, is there any other means of deflecting this Administration from policies which are having disastrous consequences for the nation's well-being?"

Neither Mr Bassett nor Mr Len Murray, general secretary of the TUC, would be drawn on which groups of workers might be involved in the threat or use of industrial strength, although the water workers, most of whom belong to Mr Bassett's General and Municipal Workers Union, and the civil servants are poised to strike in pursuit of higher pay.

Mr Murray told miners: "Recent events I hope reflect a better understanding by you and your colleagues of the crucial role of the nationalized industries. But more is needed than ad hoc responses to government-created crisis."

"These industries must be provided with the resources, and most important with the financial framework, which allow them to invest adequately for the nation's future. Direct aid to private industry was also vital and immediate action was required to bring down interest rates and the sterling exchange rate."

Mr Bassett predicted that the Thatcher Administration would end up spending more than any previous government, but in an uncoordinated and unstructured fashion.

Water rate rise cut by 1.5% in Thames area

By Christopher Warman
Local Government Correspondent

The Thames Water Authority yesterday reduced its increase in charges by 1.5 per cent to 12.5 per cent from April after a government request for extra savings to help consumers, especially industrial and commercial users.

To do so it has cut its £623.5m budget by £14.7m, half the savings coming from a reduction in capital spending. The authority hopes the savings can be made without any reduction in services, but some projects will have to be postponed.

In common with the other water authorities, Thames was asked to make savings after the Government expressed concern at the proposed increases in charges, ranging from 14 to 28 per cent.

Teams of independent accountants went to each authority to establish where savings could be made, but reported back to Mr Michael Heseltine, Secretary of State for the Environment, that there was little margin for cost cutting.

As a result the authorities have made small spending cuts, and the borrowing limits have been adjusted among the authorities within the same total of £454m to reduce the burden on charges for some of the worst affected authorities. The Thames Water Authority has had its external financing limit cut by nearly £10m, and the North West Water Authority, for example, received an additional £21m, enabling it to reduce its increase in charges from 26 to 16.5 per cent.

In the Commons yesterday, Mrs Margaret Thatcher diplomatically congratulated the water authorities.



Mr Philip Young feeding treated straw to his herd of Poll Herefords at Ringstead, near Hunstanton, Norfolk. The straw is processed by a Danish method in what is thought to be the first feed conversion plant of its kind on a British farm.

Mental health legal aid proposal

By Marcel Berlins
Legal Correspondent

Legal aid should be made available to allow patients appearing before mental health review tribunals to be represented, the Lord Chancellor's advisory committee on legal aid says in its annual report published yesterday.

Such legal aid is urgently needed, the committee says. Legal representation is not an adequate substitute.

"The decisions of these tribunals will often depend, to a large extent, on the medical reports on the patients, which would be made available to a solicitor but might not always be made available either to the applicant himself or to his lay representative."

The work involved in representing applicants is extremely specialised, and solicitors are more likely to have relevant knowledge and expertise than are most lay people."

The committee accepts the

arguments put to it by MIND, the mental health charity, that no other tribunal deals directly with the liberty of the subject, and that the vulnerability of patients detained in institutions made it particularly difficult for them to argue their case themselves.

The committee draws attention to the injustices caused when parents whose children may be taken away from them and put in the care of the local authority are not entitled to be represented in court.

The Government has repeatedly said that there is no money available for extending legal aid for that purpose. But the Lord Chancellor's committee proposes an interim solution, allowing parents to be represented if it is shown that there is a conflict of interests between parents and child.

The committee commends the work of conciliation services in divorce cases.

Research into conciliation services in Bristol, the pioneering city for such schemes, suggests that they often take much of the bitterness out of divorce and that there is a saving on legal aid expenditure.

In a report published with the advisory committee's report the Law Society calls for criminal legal aid to be made available to people applying against a magistrate's refusal of bail. It proposes that it should be possible for such appeals to go to Crown Court judges instead of High Court judges.

The statistics published with the report show that civil legal aid totalled £47m in the year ended March 31, 1980, and that criminal legal aid in magistrates' courts amounted to £30m. Legal aid granted for Crown Court cases is not included in the statistics.

Legal Aid: 36th Annual Report of the Law Society and of the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee (Stationery Office, £5.70).

Satellite plan by Britain under study

By Pearce Wright
Science Editor

Plans for a new military satellite communications system, to be brought into operation in 1986 at a cost of £100m, are being examined today by the equipment procurement committee at the Ministry of Defence.

Its recommendations on how the development could be paid for, will be passed to the Cabinet for approval. The case for establishing a communications system designed for the British Armed Services, but which can link up with the United States and Nato networks, has been agreed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

However, the needs of the Royal Navy, which would operate the planned Trident missile force, have been a dominant factor in the decision. The Ministry of Defence last launched a satellite exclusively for British military use in 1974. Shortly afterwards the United Kingdom defence communications network was merged into the Nato system.

But that is no longer adequate to cover the range and capacity of communications links required by the Ministry of Defence. Nato satellite are designed for a well defined zone of largely land forces using super-high-frequency radio links.

The new type of system also specifies an ultra-high-frequency band for the shipborne and submarine part of the project.

In brief

Man guilty of 64 driving charges

Michael Tree, an unemployed labourer of Bushon, Wiltshire, faced 62 motoring charges, including driving without insurance, at Wootton Bassett Magistrates' Court yesterday. He admitted 57 offences and was found guilty on seven others; the rest were withdrawn by the police or dismissed. He was disqualified from driving for three years, fined a total of £160 for 11 offences and given a two-year conditional discharge on the others.

Tougher action against illegal parkers urged

Stricter measures to curb illegal parking, such as the use of wheel clamps or "bulldozers" on cars, were called for by Greater London Council officials at the Commons Select Committee on Transport yesterday.

Mr Alan Greenough, leader of the council's planning and communications policy committee, said that many motorists parked with impunity. The chance of meeting a policeman was small and even when a fine was issued it was often not paid.

Sunday games opposed

Mr James Jardine, chairman of the Police Federation, said yesterday: "If Sunday football spreads it will mean cancellation of police officers' Sunday leave. We shall be making our views known to the Home Secretary and the football authorities."

Importing by air

Peter Dudley, aged 45, an actor in the television series, *Coronation Street*, was fined £200 at Manchester City Magistrates' Court yesterday when he admitted importing for an unusual purpose in a public lavatory.

Bail for policeman

Police Constable Michael Arthur Pollock, aged 22, was granted bail until April 6 at Horseferry Road Magistrates' Court, London, yesterday accused of trying to cheat an insurance company of nearly £1,000 by claiming that his car was missing.

TB patient found

A search throughout Britain for a man suffering from highly infectious tuberculosis who discharged himself from hospital ended yesterday when Mr James Cross, a wanderer, was found in Walton-on-Thames, Surrey.

Sleeping policemen

The Government is to support legislation to make it easier for councils to install road humps, known as sleeping policemen, to slow down traffic in areas with a high accident record.

Bus crew cameras

The Barnsley-based Yorkshire Traction Company is planning to spend more than £250,000 on cameras to combat violence against bus crews.

Tory MP calls for change in Government's policies

By Fred Emery
Political Editor

"You can only expand your way out of inflation", a senior Tory backbencher said yesterday in urging the Government to adopt a "positive industrial strategy of trying to invest in winners instead of the present backing of losers."

Mr Peter Tapsell, MP for Horncastle, a frequent and formidable critic of the management of the Government's monetary policies, insisted in a lecture at City University, London, that it would be folly to ignore the present danger signals of collapse.

The decline in manufacturing investment and the remorseless squeeze on profit margins of almost all businesses "must be arrested quickly if our national situation in 1984 is not indeed to become Orwellian."

Mr Tapsell said that "seed corn" capital expenditure had to be maintained, particularly in a slump, while current expenditure could be cut. So far the Government's approach had tended to be the other way round.

"Some forms of expenditure on telecommunications, on

in the public sector—on defence roads and railways, on housing, for example—can be very helpful to the private sector", he said.

Mr Tapsell suggested that priority be given to high technology and high value-added industries and reiterated his call for lower interest and exchange rates, combined with a clearly defined industrial strategy.

He insisted that the tough questions deserved study, including (and he acknowledged historical example) why Hitler was able to expand the German economy in the three years after 1933 without provoking a return to ruinous inflation.

Mr Tapsell accepted that it was difficult for the Government to "pick winners" but said that that must be preferable to the present policy. "By having no industrial policy we get the worst of both worlds."

Noting that revenues from North Sea oil might rise to £15,000m by 1984, Mr Tapsell said they ought to be used partly to equip the growth industries to enable them to compete internationally.

Government's strategy 'has collapsed'

By Our Political Staff

Criticism of the Government's economic policies was voiced last night by Mr George Giddens, Conservative MP for Reigate. He said in Brent, north London, that many would ask, after the backdoor over-closures, whether the Government knew where it was going.

Mr Walter Goldsmith, director general of the Institute of Directors, told a private meeting of the Conservative backbench finance committee that the coherence and force of the Government's economic strategy had collapsed.

His members' firms were being "threatened with imminent liquidation by the piratical, unfair competition of nationalised industries subsidised by private sector's taxes."

The Government "is in danger of presiding over the gradual and pragmatic strengthening of the powers, the privileges, and the size of the nationalized industries and the trade union

Medical schools are likely to stay

By Nicholas Timmins

Recommendations in the *Flowers* report, published last year, which would have closed all or part of three of London's medical schools, will almost certainly not be adopted after the publication yesterday of a report from a London University working party on the cost of medical education.

Figures in the report suggest that closing down a medical school would not produce large-scale savings in the rising cost of medical education. Far greater savings can be

made by increasing the ratio of students to staff.

The *Flowers* report estimated that its proposals would save at least £3m a year. The new figures suggest, however, that savings on undergraduate medical education from the proposals would total only about £700,000.

Closing the King's College preclinical course would actually cost money, while the savings from the closure of the Royal Free course would be minimal.

Although closures cannot yet

be ruled out, it is likely that none of the 17 options covered by yesterday's report will be adopted, but the mass of data will be used to construct new options which may well involve closer associations, and possibly long-term mergers between four pairs of medical schools, including the Westminster and Charing Cross.

In addition, the report points out that if St George's Hospital medical school remained at its current numbers, instead of expanding as planned, considerable savings could be made.

Some people needing passports would, under the Bill's provisions, have to produce not only their own birth certificates but also those of their parents. They would have to provide evidence of continuous residence, even if they were born in Britain.

Other speakers said the Bill, if enacted, would lead to the creation of hundreds of thousands of stateless citizens and undermine the right of nationality of people who should be entitled to British citizenship.

The ministers responsible for the Bill were not accused of intentional racial discrimination, but it was the synod's general view that the Bill would produce that effect.

Powell protest: Mr Enoch Powell said yesterday that it was unjustifiable for the Bill to impose upon children at birth British citizenship which both parents might have deliberately eschewed (Our Parliamentary Staff writes).

When the Common committee considering the Bill resumed, Mr Powell, Official Ulster Unionist MP for Down

Synod condemns 'racially divisive and inequitable' nationality Bill

By Clifford Longley
Religious Affairs Correspondent

Strong criticism of the Government's nationality Bill was voiced in the General Synod of the Church of England yesterday. A motion referring to it as "racially divisive and socially inequitable" was carried with only one dissenting vote.

That vote effectively commits the Anglican bishops in the House of Lords to oppose the Bill. One synod speaker indicated that the bishops may table amendments to it.

The Rev Martin Leigh, of Derby diocese, summarized feeling against the Bill by declaring: "One can only wonder if the Government have forgotten all they said about the tyranny of the state when they were in opposition."

Any nationality Bill needed objective criteria, but this Bill says you are British if the Home Secretary chooses to say you are.

The Premier of Birmingham, the Very Rev Basil Moss, said there was a strong sense of insecurity and anxiety in the minority communities in Britain, which he had experienced as chairman of the largest

community relations council in the country.

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Powell protest: Mr Enoch Powell said yesterday that it was unjustifiable for the Bill to impose upon children at birth British citizenship which both parents might have deliberately eschewed (Our Parliamentary Staff writes).

When the Common committee considering the Bill resumed, Mr Powell, Official Ulster Unionist MP for Down

South, described the provision as a "charter for dual nationality" on a large scale, and moved an amendment to delete it.

He said the Bill ensured that a child born in Britain of foreign parents should be a British citizen if its parents were settled here. That was a departure from principles contained in conventions signed as long ago as 1920.

Mr Timothy Raison, Minister of State, Home Office, opposing the amendment, said it was in the interests of good race relations that children born in Britain of settled parents should be British citizens. Children growing up here should have as strong a sense of security as possible, otherwise Britain would breed trouble for years.

The committee adjourned until tomorrow.

Clash with churches: Mr Raison has clashed with the Scottish Churches' Council over the Bill (our Home Affairs Correspondent writes).

In a letter replying to their attacks on it, he said: "General blanket criticism, particularly when presented without substantiation, of the Bill may arouse unnecessary anxieties."



NEW NATIONAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS.

National Insurance contributions rates and limits will change from April 6, 1981.
The main changes are shown here, but for full details get leaflet NI203. A1 B1 from a post office or social security office.

EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES.

The lower earnings limit below which no Class 1 contributions are payable, by employer or employee, is being raised to £27 a week.

The upper earnings limit up to which Class 1 contributions are payable will be raised to £3,000 a week.

The percentage rates of contribution for employees will also be increased. Those who are not contracted-out will pay 7.75% on earnings up to £200. Those who are contracted-out will pay 7.75% on earnings up to £27 and 5.25% between £27 and £200. The reduced-rate contribution payable by some married women and widows will go up to 2.75%. There will be no change in the percentage rates of contribution paid by employers.

New contribution tables are being issued direct to employers. But if copies are not received by March 21 apply as follows:

* Not contracted-out tables (CF39D) - local social security office.
* Contracted-out tables (CF392) - Contracted-out Employments Group, DHSS, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE5 1TA.
* NI Surcharge-exempt tables (CF398) - Collector of Taxes to whom end-of-year tax returns are made.

Existing tables will be invalid after April 5 and should not be used for payments of earnings after that date.

SELF-EMPLOYED.

Class 2 flat-rate contributions are being raised to £3.40 a week. If you expect to earn less than £1,475 from self-employment in the 1981-82 tax year you can apply for exemption from liability to pay Class 2 contributions.

Class 3 contribution rate will be increased to 5.75% and the lower and upper limits of profits or gains on which contributions are payable will be raised to £3,150 and £10,000 respectively.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS.

Class 3 flat-rate contributions will be raised to £3.90 a week.

Issued by the Department of Health and Social Security.

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Check on blacks in Civil Service refused

By a Staff Reporter

Bitter disappointment greeted the news yesterday that the Government has rejected the idea of monitoring the number of non-white employees in the Civil Service, as recommended in a report from the Tavistock Institute for Human Relations. Monitoring is seen by bodies such as the Commission for Racial Equality as crucial in the efforts to eliminate racial discrimination in employment. Unless an equal opportunities policy is monitored there is no way of telling whether it is working, an official said.

Miss Usha Prahar, director of the Runnymede Trust, said the Government's decision was extremely disappointing. Mr Russell Proffitt, of the London Standing Conference of Afro-Asian Councilors, said the decision was a betrayal.

Mr John Grant, Labour MP for Islington, Central, and opposition spokesman on employment, said the refusal was immensely short-sighted.

More Home News, page 26

In-service teacher training a necessity, HMIs say

By Diana Geddes
Education Correspondent

In-service training of practising teachers is no longer a luxury but a necessity, the school inspectors (HMIs) say in a discussion document on teacher training in secondary schools published yesterday.

The quality of work in secondary schools throughout the 1980s would depend not so much on the influence of newly trained teachers, important though that was, but on the majority of teachers who were already teaching; and falling pupil numbers combined with spending cuts were making their task increasingly difficult.

Closure or amalgamation of schools, reduction of promotion prospects, and an imbalance of staff specialisms within schools might all put strain on teachers' morale, dampen their vitality and enthusiasm for change and development, and strengthen the tendency towards "traditional" styles of teaching, with its over-emphasis on passive learning, note-taking and factual recall.

No expansion in resources for

in-service training could realistically be expected during the next few years. But the present level of provision of about £600 a year could have a dramatic impact on schools if those resources were accurately directed at the main weaknesses, as if the quality of all courses approached that of the best.

The report speaks with concern of the number of teachers who are inadequately trained in the subject they are teaching many of whom were operating beyond the limits of their knowledge and competence.

Falling pupil numbers were likely to increase the possibility of teachers being called on to undertake tasks for which they were not fully equipped in order to prevent the disappearance of a subject from the curriculum.

Almost all subjects have changed substantially since most practising teachers studied them. There was a urgent need in all such cases for updating and refreshment. Teacher training and the Second School: An HMI Discussion Document (Department of Education and Science, Room 411, Eltham House, York Road, London SE8 7PH; free).

WEST EUROPE

Two-time loser and Civil War officer in the abortive coup

From Harry Debelius Madrid, Feb 24

The moustached colonel who held the Spanish Government—and almost the entire Spanish Congress of Deputies—as hostages during a frontal attack on the post-Franco democracy did so, he said, out of a desire to stamp out terrorism.

Lieutenant-Colonel Antonio Tejero Molina, from the tough paramilitary Civil Guard, is a two-time coup loser. He was convicted by court martial a year and a half ago for conspiracy in a plot—Operation "Galaxy"—designed to make the entire Cabinet prisoners at the Prime Minister's residence during an absence abroad of King Juan Carlos. The plot failed for the subsequent declaration of a "government of national salvation".

While he was holding more than 300 of the key politicians of Spain as hostages, he said that in his latest effort he wanted the country to be run by a military junta until terrorism could be wiped out. Because of the intervention of fellow officers after the first attempted coup, the colonel was released from prison and put under house arrest after only one month behind bars. Then he was finally brought to trial. He was only given a seven-month jail sentence. Later he and his fellow plotters were allowed to resume their normal lives.

That first coup attempt did not go so far as the present one, but its eventual consequences would have been the same if it had been successful, Colonel Tejero Molina, who

apparently likes to state he believes in a hierarchy despite his olympic disregard for the government of the nation, would have been close to the top of the pyramid of power if the coup had succeeded.

Perhaps the price the officer had to pay for the first attempted coup was not dear enough to dissuade him from trying again—and on a grander scale.

Colonel Tejero Molina, aged 49, who is reported to have abrogated sole responsibility for the abortive coup (although a commonsense suggests that it takes more than one to conspire), was known as a fractious right-wing officer before he began conspiring against his civilian superiors.

On July 21, 1978, the Madrid daily *El Imparcial* published an open letter from the colonel to King Juan Carlos on its front page. The letter called for a tough law on terrorism, with "facilities" for the police and "rapid and exemplary punishment for the assassins".

He was reported to have been punished for writing to a publication without permission from his military superiors. Subsequently the same newspaper reprinted the letter in August and again in September.

Lieutenant-General Jaime Milans del Bosch, aged 65, whom Colonel Tejero referred to as his chief in the failed operation, is one of the most hawkish of Spain's active duty generals. But he is an officer who had a flawless professional record.

He was a second lieutenant in the forces led by Colonel Moscardó during the bitter defence of the Alcazar of Toledo during the Spanish Civil War. Later he was a captain in the "Blue Division", which General Franco sent to fight beside Hitler's troops against the Soviet Union.

Close to the time when the "Galaxy" plot came to light, the general was transferred from his post as commander of the proud Brunette armoured division, stationed in the mountains just north of Madrid, to the post of Captain-General—or commanding officer—of the Third Military District, based in Valencia.

There was no evidence to suggest any direct link between the "Galaxy" affair and his new assignment. Observers attributed his involvement in the latest coup attempt rather to a general reshuffle in the Armed Forces, which reflected the more liberal trend.

Brave photographs: The dramatic photographs taken of yesterday's seizure of the Cortes were the work of Manuel Pérez Barriopedro and Manuel Hernández de León, working for EFE, the Spanish news agency. They smuggled the film out in their clothing.



General Milans del Bosch: right in Russia.



A civil guard abandons the rebellion by climbing out of a parliament window and into custody.

The Ten alarmed by threat to democracy in Madrid

From Our Own Correspondent Brussels, Feb 24

The gunshots fired yesterday into the ceiling of the Cortes (Parliament) by rebel members of the Spanish Civil Guard set political alarm bells ringing throughout the EEC.

Relief at today's news that the incident had ended peacefully did not entirely erase the concern caused by so dramatic a demonstration of the fragility of Spain's still infant democracy.

Spain applied to join the EEC in 1977 and since the beginning of 1979 has been in negotiation with the European Commission on its terms of entry, which Madrid is hoping to achieve during 1984.

A Commission spokesman said this morning that Brussels was confident, after two years of close contacts with Spanish officials, "parliamentarians and trade unionists, that yesterday's episode of violence constitutes no more than an accident which will not affect the process of Spain's integration (into the Community)".

Entry negotiations were opened with Spain and Portugal on the implicit understanding that a democratic, pluralist political system was an indispensable political qualification.

There is no precedent, nor formal constitutional machinery, for dealing with a member-state which has ceased to be governed democratically.

Remarkable harmony on butter agreement

From Michael Hornsby Brussels, Feb 24

In a remarkable outbreak of harmony, EEC Agricultural Ministers agreed in principle here tonight on a new deal for exports of New Zealand butter to Britain and settled a number of other issues that had defied solution for many months.

The agreement was tempered only by the reservation of the Italians on one aspect of the complex inter-linked deal. The strength of the Italian objection was not immediately clear, but the Italian minister promised to give his Government's final answer by March 10.

Mr Peter Walker, the Minister of Agriculture, said he was "delighted" by this outcome, which came after surprising concessions by M Pierre Méhaignerie, his French colleague, who had earlier taken a particularly tough line over New Zealand butter.

The change in the French attitude was thought to have been motivated by a desire to clear the decks of outstanding issues and leave the ministers free to devote their attention over the next month to the annual farm price fixing negotiations.

The French Government is haunted by a nightmare vision of discontented farmers taking to the streets in the weeks before the presidential election at the end of April. Paris thus wants agreement on farm price increases by early next month, which on past experience would be something of a record.

In their first formal exchange of views today on farm prices, an overwhelming majority of ministers rejected the average 7.8 per cent increase proposed by the European Commission for 1981-82 as far too low, given the inflation in farmers' costs.

Only Mr. Walker and Herr Josef Erli, the West German minister, appeared to accept the Commission's proposal though with qualifications.

Other measures agreed tonight will release some E60m of aid for modernizing farming and fisheries and improving marketing techniques. In Northern Ireland and the Western Isles, of which between 40 and 50 per cent will be financed from EEC funds.

The ministers also agreed on a new sugar regime which gives Britain a total production quota of 1,144,000 tonnes.

Mr Gerrit Braks, the Dutch minister who chaired the meeting, said afterwards that the ministers would meet again on March 16, 23, 30 and 31 in the hope of reaching agreement on new EEC farm prices by the start of the marketing year on April 1.

Worker at the 'Giscard coal face' is urged to break his silence

From Charles Hargrove Paris, Feb 24

Only a few weeks ago M Raymond Barre, the Prime Minister, was very much in the front line of the political fray—doggedly defending the Government's economic policy for the past four-and-a-half years. With his customary indestructible self-confidence, he proclaimed that there was no valid alternative. Hardly a day went by when he was not heard to make some public pronouncement.

He manned all the battlements and repeatedly rallied the defenders of the besieged Giscardian fortress. But since January 20, he has been strangely quiescent and has kept to himself while the electoral controversy has grown increasingly strident.

He was not even stirred from his determined silence by the telling blows of M Jacques Chirac, the Mayor of Paris, at the two most conspicuous Barre failures—inflation and unemployment—and his advocacy of drastic cuts in Government spending and vigorous policy of industrial investment.

The reason is obvious. The strategists of the Elysée and of the Giscard group had come to the conclusion that the Prime Minister's consistency poor public image, which has further deteriorated in the past month (if opinion polls are to be believed), has harmed the President's own.

M Barre had ceased to be effective as the shield of M Giscard d'Estaing, a thankless rôle he has played selflessly and consistently since he took office in August, 1976, even to the point of priding himself on his unpopularity.

He saw himself as working at the coal face, leaving the President free to concentrate on higher things, both at home and abroad.

But the Government's economic record has proved more and more to be the favourite angle of attack of the contenders for the presidency—whether from party supporters or from the opposition.

In a regime where ultimately everything is decided by the President, the Prime Minister—at least in the eyes of opponents—is reduced to the rôle of a chief of staff. The blame for the Government's economic shortcomings is being laid more and more at M Giscard d'Estaing's door.

So M Barre was bidden to withdraw from the front line, and, respectful as he has always been of the spirit of the institutions of the Fifth Republic, he did as he was told.

"Please keep away from me anything which might have an electoral flavour," he told reporters who followed him to Lyons last Friday to obtain his reactions to M Chirac's scurrileous.

This attitude was in marked contrast to his wholehearted involvement in the parliamentary election campaign when the walls of Paris and leading provincial towns were plastered with large posters proclaiming: "Barre, confidence." Ministers now barely mention his name in their speeches.

Yesterday, the Council of Ministers held an extraordinary meeting at Rambouillet, near Paris, to take stock of the



French Presidential Election

action taken by the Government on 29 policy priorities, earmarked by M Barre last November, which the President wished to be implemented before the end of his first term in office.

At the close of it, M Barre was silent. It was M Giscard d'Estaing who declared, in words taken straight out of his Prime Minister's repertory: "All the priority measures decided by the Government have been implemented, and what the Government has promised has been carried out. These measures are detrimental neither to the budget nor the currency, nor the defence of the budget and the currency is a fundamental condition of the battle for economic activity and employment."

But now, according to the independent left-wing *Le Massin*, the strategists of the Giscard group are beginning to have second thoughts. M Chirac's indictment of the Government's economic policy has made a deep impression on public opinion.

Someone, it is felt, should take the mayor down a peg. The President cannot do so without loss of dignity—and who better than M Barre, who could claim the right of reply.

It remains to be seen whether he will be willing to emerge from a silence, which, all things considered, suits him well. For he has his own political future to think of, even though he always denies he has any presidential ambitions; and it is not at all impossible that, in an emergency, the country might turn to him.

M Laurent Fabius, the Socialist Party spokesman, said yesterday that the Government's record was negative; that the President had not kept his promises; and that the extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers was purely intended to fake this record.

Socialists launch newspaper in France

From Our Own Correspondent Paris, Feb 24

The birth of a new party newspaper in France, at a time when there are practically none left apart from the communist *L'Humanité* and those ordinary dailies that have survived are threatened with disappearance, is at best an act of faith, at worst a piece of folly.

The Socialist Party is not wanting the first: its enemies would say it has also a good dose of the second; but the fact is that today, for the first time in 14 years since the demise of the old *Populaire*, it can boast once again of a daily of its own.

The first issue of *Combat Socialiste* came out today. The newspaper was not spared prolonged birth pangs, and its

future is by no means assured; but at least it exists. The tentative plan for a new socialist organ was announced nearly a year ago, on the ground that the Socialist Party, having become the largest party in France, was fully capable of supporting a daily newspaper.

But even within socialist ranks, opinions were divided on the merits of the venture. M Claude Geron, a member of the party's national secretariat, presided at the end. Publication of the first issue, originally scheduled for January 26, was however postponed.

The first issue has had a printing run of 100,000. M Geron says he has 13,000 regular subscribers; his objective is 25,000, and kiosk and bookstall sales of another 10,000.

The editorial staff is made up of 26 journalists, under the editorship of M Claude Gault, the former editor-in-chief of *Témoignage Chrétien*, the Roman Catholic weekly. *Combat Socialiste* is a 16-page tabloid divided into six sections—politics, foreign, economic and social, culture, sports and society.

The first issue contains an interview on unemployment with M François Mitterrand, the socialist candidate in the presidential elections.

He says: "Unemployment is a real bloodletting for the country. It puts everything at stake. Already the standard of living. In the longer run, national independence and public safety will be undermined if an end is not put to this haemorrhage."

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OVERSEAS

Moscow criticism of Italian and Spanish communists

From Michael Binyon

Moscow, Feb 24. As the Soviet Communist Party Congress began, bearing speeches from leading foreign communists on its second day, a Politburo member criticized Eurocommunist parties, accusing them of damaging the world revolutionary process and the interests of their peoples.

In a clear reference to the Spanish and Italian parties, which have sent only low-level delegations, Mr Vladimir Shcherbitsky, party secretary of the Ukraine, called on all parties to support Moscow in the face of threats from the West.

His criticism of Eurocommunism echoes that issued yesterday by President Brezhnev in his opening address to the 5,000 delegates, in which he accused parties opposing Soviet policies of helping imperialist propaganda.

The Soviet leader said the Russians welcomed "comradely, constructive" criticism, but were categorically opposed to criticism that distorted socialist reality and, wittingly or unwittingly helped their class opponents.

As further evidence that his words were intended especially

for the Italian and Spaniards, he pointedly omitted them from a list of foreign parties with which he said Moscow had good relations.

Criticism of Soviet policy would be more acceptable if it was voiced privately. "When communists fight for the common revolutionary cause, we believe that patient comradely discussion of differing views and positions serves their common aim best of all," Mr Brezhnev said.

The Soviet leader's remarks were broadcast to the nation in a long report on the opening day's proceedings on Soviet television in the evening. The 100-minute broadcast, ending speculation that the 74-year-old leader did not himself read all his speech, showed him addressing the delegates in a firm voice, though he occasionally stumbled over his words and spoke extremely slowly.

The full text of his speech was reproduced in all Soviet papers today. Meanwhile, foreign diplomats have been analysing Mr Brezhnev's offer of a summit conference with President Reagan and other foreign policy initiatives. The Russians have been closely studying his

remarks on the domestic situation, which took up two-thirds of his lengthy report.

Most agreed that he was remarkably frank in outlining the difficulties facing the Soviet economy and the worries voiced by ordinary people in recent years. However, he gave few hints of any changes in policy and no indication that the Russians had any intention of carrying out new economic reforms.

He said the period since the party congress in 1976 had not been easy. There had been many difficulties in the country's development, though he asserted that the party's economic strategy was correct.

In spite of the growth of industry, incomes, the mechanization of agriculture and other achievements, much needed to be done. The main priority, he said, was the supply of consumer goods, and food, especially meat.

In the next five years meat production would rise by three million tons to more than 18 million and every peasant and farmer was urged to do his bit. Mr Brezhnev spoke of the importance of private agriculture, but said that the state was not going to continue spending

huge sums on state agriculture without a better return on its investments.

On consumer goods, he said the plan for their output was unfulfilled year after year. It was now the party's prime requirement to improve this, and to show "concrete concern for the concrete person" by expanding consumer services also.

He had harsh words for poor management, and hinted that tough new penalties would be brought in to stop what he admitted was the widespread downward revision of state plans to allow workers to earn unmerited bonuses.

He criticized the poor use of existing plant in industry and the waste of raw materials, and launched a new slogan: "The economy must be economical." Machines should be used more intensively, fuel and energy more sparingly, and the existing industries should be more efficient.

No economic reforms or new plans were proposed to boost labour productivity which Mr Brezhnev said was vital, but he said better labour discipline was essential. Science had to help industry, and innovations should be put into practice

more rapidly. The Russians should also stop buying things from abroad that they could make perfectly well at home.

The Soviet leader touched on the sensitive subject of nationalism in the Soviet Union. He praised the Russian people for their "disinterested assistance" to vast areas of Central Asia, but in a significant concession to growing Russian nationalism, noted that large areas of the Russian Republic had fallen behind in development, and help for this area was an urgent priority.

In other republics, he said, the party was against "artificial inflation" but would not permit their "artificial inflation".

On ideology, Mr Brezhnev was forthright in condemning weak political education. He spoke of the boredom of modern youth. "Have not forms of our mass political work become too fossilized? After all, it is one thing to address people who have little education, and another to speak to the present-day Soviet citizen."

He said propaganda should avoid stereotypes and phrases and be more sensitive to the needs of the people. Above all it should not shun sensitive issues or be

afraid of difficult questions. It was also essential that criticism should not be "persecuted".

Regarding the arts, he called for serious thought-provoking works, but hinted at a crackdown on any dissenting writings or paintings that strayed from the party line and "discredit our Soviet reality". He added: "The party was not and can never be indifferent to the ideological orientation of our art."

Mr Brezhnev had words of praise for the KGB security police for stopping anti-government actions, and warnings for black marketers, speculators, and especially for doctors and medical assistants, who had abused the health system and neglected their duties.

Finally, he called for a revision of the party's programme, which he said was now out of date. That programme, drawn up 20 years ago by Nikita Khrushchev, is something of an embarrassment because of its forecasts that the Soviet Union would have overtaken capitalism by now. Mr Brezhnev said a new programme should establish, only principles, as it was impossible and inappropriate to foretell particulars.

Polish leader pledges way will be barred to 'counter-revolution'

From Our Own Correspondent

Moscow, Feb 24

Mr Stanislaw Kania, the Polish Party Secretary, today thanked the Russians for their understanding in his country's crisis, but told them that Poland had the strength and will to prevent counter-revolution in the country.

Addressing delegates on the second day of the Soviet Communist Party Congress, Mr Kania gave full backing to President Brezhnev's assertion that the defence of Communism in Poland was the concern of all fellow-communist countries—the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine.

But in a clear plea for more time and patience from Poland's anxious neighbours, he said the country would solve its problems in the spirit of socialism and in the interests of all its allies.

He said his Government was not blind to the openly counter-revolutionary forces in the

country which were backed by imperialism. But in what appeared to be a rebuke to hardliners in East Germany and Czechoslovakia, he said the Polish party had decided to seek a political solution to the social conflict and to restore the confidence of society in the people's power.

It was not socialism that had led to Poland's difficulties, he added, but the violation of its principles and the disregard of its economic laws and Leninist norms and the neglect of ideological work.

He reassured his Soviet hosts that the Polish-Soviet alliance would always be a basic principle of Polish foreign policy. Dariusz Piontek writes from Warsaw: The speech confirms the line which the Polish leadership has taken in recent weeks. It is determined to reach settlements by negotiation and agreement. But externally it intends to reinforce economic and political integration within the Warsaw Pact and Comecon.

Defeat for radicals in Kuwait election

Kuwait, Feb 24. Conservative, pro-Government candidates won a landslide victory today in Kuwait's parliamentary election. The result was a resounding defeat for radical Arab nationalist politicians and supporters of Ayatollah Khomeini, the Iranian leader.

The election results, which are believed to reflect popular Arab opinion throughout the Gulf oil states, were interpreted by analysts as a demand for gradualist, pro-Western and conservative government at a time when the region is being buffeted by revolution and war.

The winners in yesterday's voting for the 50-seat National Assembly were announced early today, after the ballots from 25 constituencies were tabulated.

In accordance with the constitution, the three-year-old Government, led by Mr Saad Abdulrahman al-Sabah, the Prime Minister, tendered its resignation to Shaikh Jaber al-Ahmed al-Sabah, the Emir. The Emir asked the ministers to remain in their posts while consultations were held to form a new Government.

The voting produced two surprises. The first was the total defeat of the radical Arab nationalist candidates led by Dr Ahmed al-Khatib, whose movement dominated Kuwaiti parliament life in the 1960s and 1970s.

The other was the poor showing of the Shia candidates inspired by Ayatollah Khomeini's revolution. Shias make up about 39 per cent of the Kuwaiti male population.—UPI.

67 nations discuss how to regulate trade in animals

Elephants feet become waste bins

From Trevor Fishlock

Delhi, Feb 24

An extraordinary and poignant photograph is being shown at a wildlife conference here. It shows dozens of hacked-off elephants' feet, drying in rows in the African sun. Once dried, these feet are sold to tourists as keepsakes.

Another photograph shows a butcher in Germany, evidently specializing in exotic meats, displaying a deep-frozen tiger and crocodile. Yet another shows a roaring gorilla, killed in central Africa for the sake of its skull.

The trade in limbs, skins, juices and other bits of wild animals, as well as in live animals and birds, has increased greatly in recent years. In a number of countries it has become a significant business.

West Germany, for example, imported wildlife products

worth £21m last year. In some countries rhinoceros horns, sold to suggestive men who believe it to have aphrodisiac properties, fetches £4,500 a kilogram.

Elephants are still slaughtered in their thousands to meet the demands of ivory traders. About five million crocodiles are being killed every year for their fashionable skins.

The trade in exotic, fashionable and sometimes useful wild animal products is being discussed in the next 10 days at the third conference of signatories to the 1973 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora (CITES).

This is perhaps the largest gathering of wildlife experts and of people involved in the trade in wild animals. Sixty-seven countries and more than

100 wildlife organizations are represented.

Because CITES seeks to regulate the wild animal trade, as well as to ban the hunting of threatened species, the conference is an important meeting place for conservationists and for those with a vested interest in pelts, ivory, whale oil, animal souvenirs and the sale of a variety of creatures from parrots to bobcats.

The conference will consider proposals to extend the lists drawn up by CITES, which ban or strictly control the hunting or collecting of certain fauna and flora.

West Germany is trying to have the hunting of three kinds of whale—sperm, sei and fin—outlawed. If accepted, this could put pressure on the International Whaling Commission to end its practice of allowing hunting quotas on these species.

Last-minute hint that Britons may not be freed

From Tony Allaway

Tehran, Feb 24

Three British missionaries were expected to fly to Europe from Iran tomorrow, free for the first time in six months. But the word on everyone's lips was "Inshallah" ("God willing").

They are expected to board a scheduled Iran Air flight to Istanbul, Frankfurt and Paris which leaves Tehran at 12.30 pm (9 am GMT).

A brief comment by Hojatoleslam Ali Ghodousi, the Revolutionary Prosecutor-General, in an interview with the state radio and television cast a last-minute cloud over the hopes of their release. He indicated that although there was no legal obstacle to their freedom, the Iranian Government might still hold them, while insisting that Britain also freed two Iranians jailed in London.

Talk that such an exchange was being pressed by the Iranians has previously been strongly denied by the British authorities and diplomatic sources insisted today that it had never been brought up in discussions.

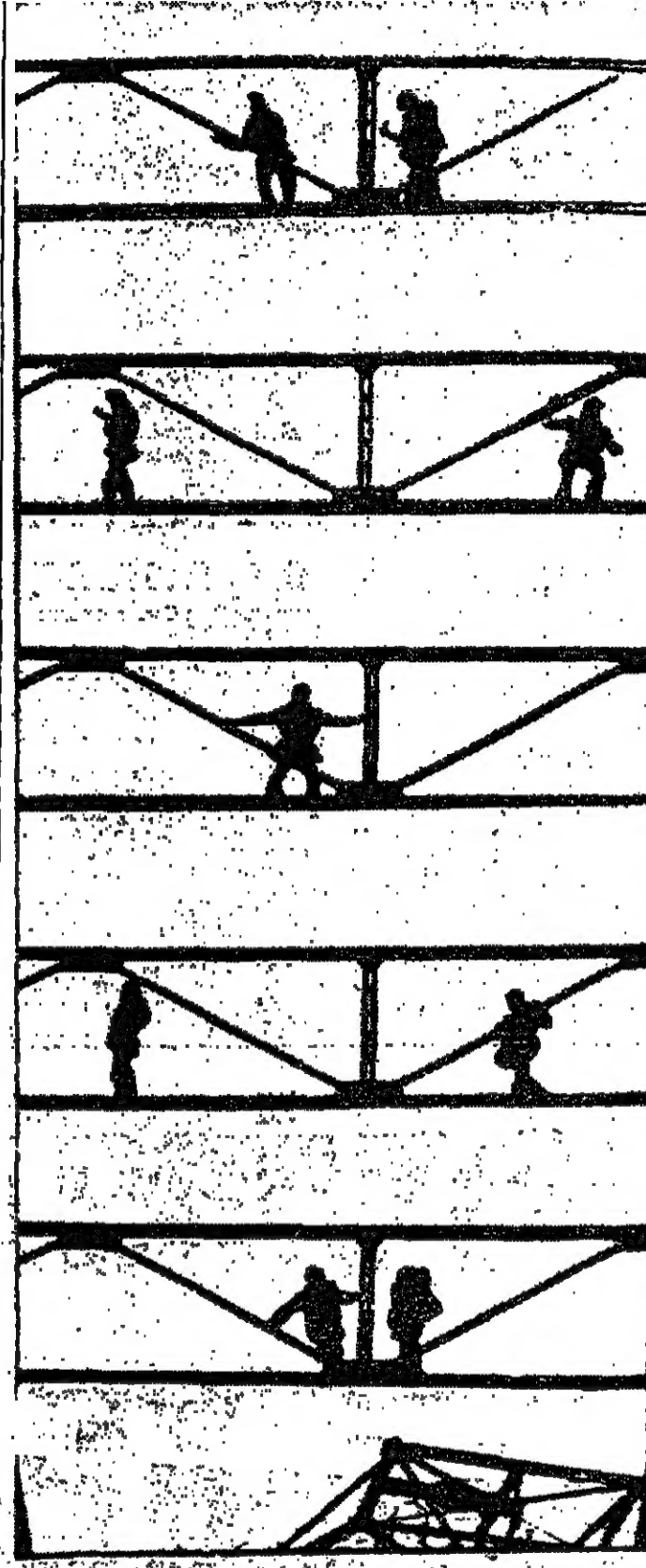
The Prosecutor-General said the British—Dr John Coleman, his wife Dr Audrey Coleman and Miss Jean Waddell—could be released "if there are no problems in respect to the relations between the two Governments".

He said that although legally free on the basis of the documents brought against them, which an Iranian has admitted forging, the three missionaries were not without guilt in a general sense.

Interviewed by the official Pars news agency today, the three Anglicans reaffirmed that they had been treated very well. The Colemans will be leaving Iran extremely reluctantly. Having lived here for 32 years they now regard it as their home and had asked to be allowed to stay.

Diplomatic sources said representatives were made to Iranian officials today concerning a fourth jailed Briton, Mr Andrew Pyke, a businessman. The representations had borne no fruit, the sources said.

The Prosecutor-General allegedly said Mr Pyke would be put on trial on charges of espionage and embezzlement from the Helicopter Aviation Service company that he ran in Tehran.



Silhouettes of workers building a huge hydroelectric scheme at Kurpsai in the Soviet Union.

Détente key issue in Thatcher US talks

By David Spaulier

Diplomatic Correspondent

Three main issues will dominate the agenda of Mrs Margaret Thatcher's talks with President Reagan at the White House tomorrow: East-West relations, which are at a particularly sensitive stage; the Middle East, including the Gulf war; and southern Africa, notably Namibia.

To this will be added a fourth item, of special interest to the Americans: the crisis in El Salvador.

Mrs Thatcher, who is accompanied by Lord Carrington, the Foreign Secretary, flies from London today, making the first visit by a European leader to Washington since President Reagan took office. Mr Thatcher is going with her and her daughter Carol will join them in Washington.

The time which the Prime Minister and the President will actually spend in their own session of talks is only two hours, though the programme is crowded.

The main purpose of the meeting is for the two leaders to get a sense of each other's views, rather than go into the issues in depth. From that point of view, the Prime Minister and her advisers are in no doubt that a great deal can be done in the time. In addition, there will be a formal dinner at the White House tomorrow evening and the British Embassy on Friday, in honour of President Reagan.

Mrs Thatcher will also meet Congressional leaders, and make two keynote speeches, one on Anglo-American relations at Georgetown University, and one on East-West relations in New York, before flying home on Saturday night.

These speeches are seen by the Prime Minister, together with her recent address to the Pilgrims' dinner in London, as forming a comprehensive statement of her approach to foreign policy.

Lord Carrington, who will join her for the White House talks, will have separate meetings with Mr Haig, the Secretary of State, at which the whole range of foreign affairs will be discussed.

As seen from London, the new Administration is still in the process of forming its views on most subjects. Its general line on détente and East-West relations is beginning to emerge.

Israeli leader uses remark by Mr Reagan to justify Jewish settlements

From Christopher Walker

Jerusalem, Feb 24

Mr Menachem Begin, the Israeli Prime Minister, today cited a recent statement by President Reagan to justify his Government's continuing policy of expanding settlements in the occupied West Bank.

Mr Begin's remarks have come after a series of angry diplomatic messages to Washington from Arab leaders about the apparent change signalled by the new President in America's attitude towards the West Bank settlements.

Addressing the annual meeting of the Foreign Press Association, Mr Begin said that Israel would continue with its plans to build 10 new settlements in the occupied territories before the June elections.

He openly criticized Mr Reagan for referring to the occupied territory in question as "The West Bank", claiming that its historical name was

"Judea and Samaria"—the term which the Israelis now insist on describing the land conquered in the Six-Day War.

The Prime Minister was answering a question from an American reporter about a local press report, stating that more than £2m had been set aside in the 1981 budget to accommodate the accelerated settlement plans.

The figure had aroused bitter criticism because of the Cabinet's declared intention to cut public spending in an effort to reduce inflation from its present rate of 140 per cent.

Referring pointedly to a recent much-publicized remark in Mr Reagan's statement that the new Jewish settlements were "not illegal", Mr Begin said: "As he used the double negative, of course the result is positive, they are legal. We always believed it. They are legal, legitimate and also an integral part of our national security."

CND emissary in US will oppose Thatcher line

By Ian Bradley

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) is sending one of its leading members to the United States to present the case against nuclear weapons during Mrs Thatcher's visit to President Reagan.

Mrs Joan Ruddock, a member of CND's national council and coordinator of the Newbury Campaign against Cruise Missiles, is flying to Washington tomorrow.

On Friday, while the Prime Minister is making a speech at Georgetown University, Mrs Ruddock will give a press conference under the auspices of the Institute of Policy Studies in Washington.

She said yesterday: "Mrs Thatcher will be in America to show the amount of support that the British Government is prepared to give to Mr Reagan's policy of increasing the nuclear arms build-up."

"I want to make clear to the Americans that while that may be the Government's view, it

is not the view of the British population. Polls show that at least half the population is now opposed to having nuclear weapons in Britain at all."

"I also want to make clear what it is like to live in an overcrowded Europe with nowhere to escape if the bomb does fall."

Mrs Bruce Kent, general secretary of CND, said that a poll at the end of last year showed that 56 per cent of the public were opposed to the siting of American cruise missiles in Britain and 59 per cent opposed the Government's decision to purchase the Trident system.

He has invited Mr John Nott, Secretary of State for Defence, to take part in a public debate on nuclear weapons. The Ministry of Defence said yesterday that it was aware of the invitation but no response had yet been made by the minister.

Mr Nott will be opening a Commons debate on the Trident purchase on March 3.

Haig inquiry is dropped

From Our Own Correspondent

Washington, Feb 24

The Senate today effectively abandoned its attempt to obtain information about the possible involvement of Mr Alexander Haig, the Secretary of State, in the Watergate affair, thereby removing the final question mark over the former Nato commander's suitability for the senior post in President Reagan's cabinet.

By a vote of eight to five the Senate foreign relations committee decided that it was not in

the American national interest to pursue Mr Haig's role in the Watergate controversy.

During its confirmation hearings last month, the committee had decided to subpoena a list of the tape recordings involving Mr Haig's conversations with former President Nixon during the final weeks of the Watergate scandal. But Mr Nixon resisted the publication of the tapes. This objection effectively blocked the release of the list of the tapes without a lengthy court battle.

HOW THE BLIND READ

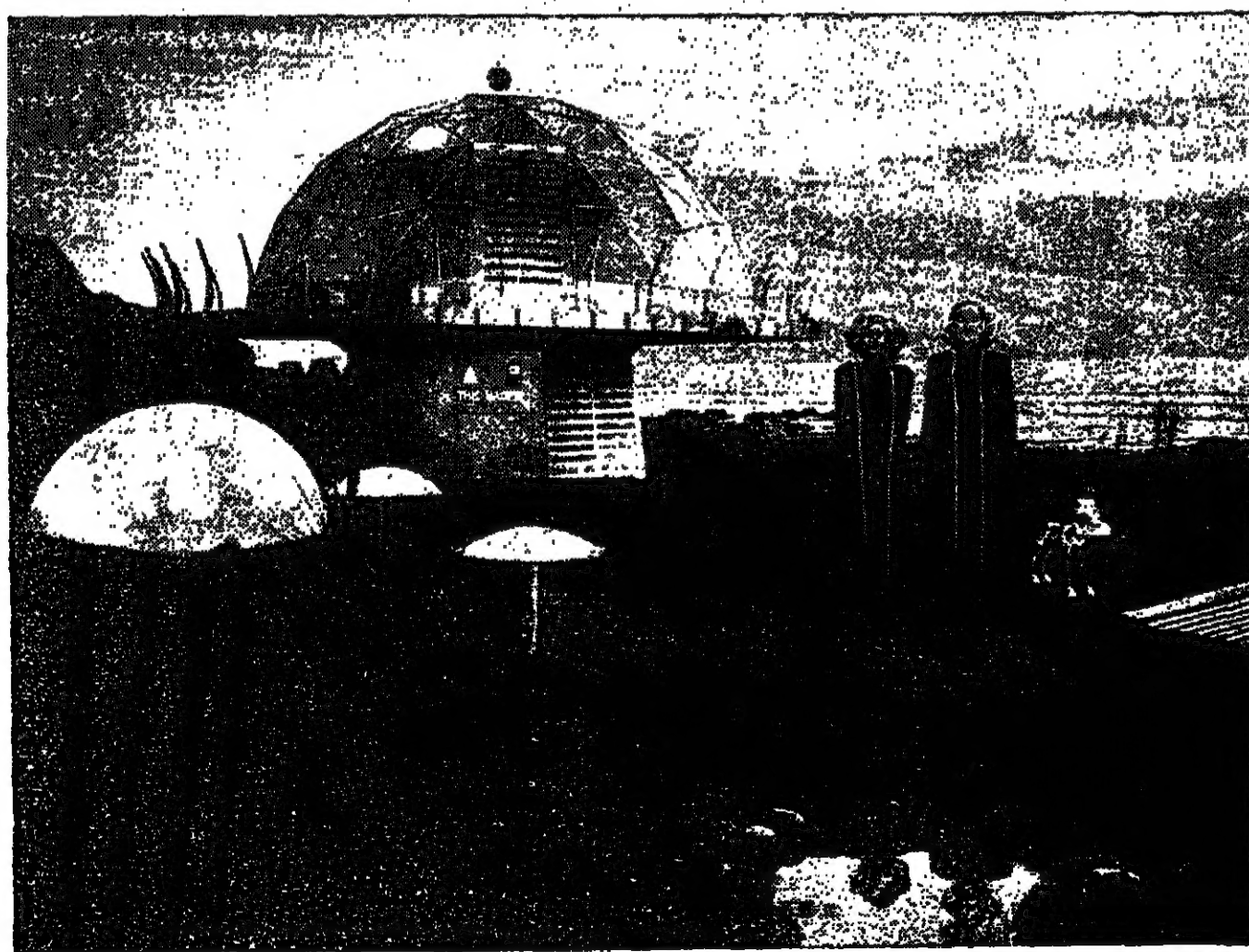
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OVERSEAS

EEC expected to send aid to civil war victims in El Salvador

From Michael Hornsby
Brussels, Feb 24

The EEC is expected to dispatch a £1.3m package of emergency food and relief aid to El Salvador early next month, subject to assurances from the International Red Cross that the aid will not fall into the hands of left-wing guerrillas.

The aid is intended for refugees who have fled their homes because of the civil war in El Salvador.

An 11-man mission from the International Red Cross, which is coordinating the work of Western relief agencies in El Salvador, is investigating conditions in the Central American country, and is expected to report its findings in about a week's time.

The Red Cross team was to have been sent to El Salvador anyway, but its dispatch was hastened because of the pressure put on the EEC by the United States to show that humanitarian aid would not be channelled to anti-government forces.

The American view was put forcefully by Mr Lawrence Eagleburger, President Reagan's special envoy, during a tour of EEC capitals last week. He also wrote with him what was described as "hard evidence" of Soviet, Cuban and other communist involvement in the supply of arms to the Salvadoran guerrillas.

EEC foreign ministers decided at a meeting in Brussels last week to postpone a decision on the aid for El Salvador to

give time for consideration of Mr Eagleburger's representations.

The American evidence on arms supplies appears to have impressed EEC governments. In Washington yesterday Mr Jean François-Poncet, the French Foreign Minister, conceded "the existence beyond any possible doubt of an important arms traffic to El Salvador via Nicaragua."

The British Government, though without any independent evidence of its own, accepts that communist arms have been reaching guerrillas in El Salvador and shares American concern about the spread of Soviet and Cuban involvement.

The Foreign Office has also gone out of its way to counter suggestions that Mr Eagleburger's representations had been resolved as an intrusion into EEC affairs. "We see (his) visit as a further expression of the readiness of the United States Administration to consult their allies," a spokesman said.

However, EEC governments want to see a political solution in El Salvador and would certainly not want to get involved in direct support for the ruling regime, whose brutal repression is seen as the prime cause of the left-wing insurrection.

The Ten are confident that the European aid—mainly food and medical supplies—can be channelled safely via the Red Cross to those for whom it is intended—the civil war victims.

Hiroshima is symbol for world, says the Pope

From Peter Hazelhurst
Tokyo, Feb 24

The Pope today met Emperor Hirohito, once regarded by the Japanese as their god-king. The Emperor reigned over Japan during the Second World War, and at an open air Mass in a baseball stadium here, the Pope invoked the name of Hiroshima, the atomic-bombed city, to make an emotional appeal for world peace.

The spiritual leader of the Catholic Church and the former god-king met for the first time today at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo.

This was the first meeting in the history of the Catholic Church between a Pope and a Japanese emperor from a dynasty deified as gods for 2,000 years until the end of the war.

During the protracted 50-minute meeting, Japan's 79-year-old emperor told the Pope that Japan owed much to the Catholic Church because the first Catholic mission introduced Japan to European civilisation. "I also have to thank the Catholic Church for its charitable work during the hard times at the end of the war," the Emperor said.

The Pope replied that he admired Japan as a country which placed a heavy emphasis on moral justice. "I hope that there will be greater exchanges between Japan and European countries, not only in the



Tokyo police plugging the loudspeakers of a lorry belonging to right-wingers who are demonstrating against the Pope during his four-day visit to Japan.

material field, but also in the spiritual field."

Conducting an open-air Mass in Japanese for 38,000 Catholics in the Korakuen Baseball stadium later, the Pope declared that the name Hiroshima should be used as an international symbol for peace.

Delivering his homily to the congregation as light rain fell over Tokyo, the Pope said: "I have set foot on the land that

has known the special horror of destruction during the last war. The name of the Japanese city of Hiroshima has become a symbol of the threats towards which the whole of humanity is moving. If it does not succeed in overcoming the terrible temptation to dominate others by means of all-out nuclear destruction.

"Here, where the memory and signs of the explosion of the first atomic bomb are living and obvious, the words of Christ cannot fail to take on a particular vividness: Peace be with you."

"These words must become a challenge. They must reach all the horrors of the final warning," the Pope said.

He will travel to Hiroshima tomorrow to pray for world peace at the site of epicentre of the atomic bomb.

S Africa may recruit British teachers

From Ray Kennedy
Johannesburg, Feb 24

A campaign to recruit teachers in Britain for South African schools for whites is being considered by the South African Government.

The shortage of teachers, particularly in the Transvaal, the most populous province, is said to have reached the point of crisis and Dr Gerrit Viljoen, the Minister of National Education, has said that an overseas recruitment programme is worth considering.

Teachers are needed particularly for mathematics and science classes in English-language schools. Mr Jack Ballard, general secretary of the Transvaal Teachers' Association, which represents teachers in English-language schools, said there had been 5,000 resignations last year, most of them in English schools, but Afrikaans-language schools were "also feeling the pinch".

The state of resignations has been caused by mounting discontent over working conditions and pay and aggravated by lucrative offers from commerce, which is competing fiercely in booming economic conditions for academically qualified people.

Last week, in a pre-general election mini-budget, teachers were awarded 20 per cent pay rises.

Mr Ballard said today that his association had long advocated the recruitment of teachers abroad, particularly in Britain, where teacher training was more closely aligned to the South African system, than in other English-speaking coun-

tries such as the United States and Australia. But he foresaw difficulties. With the new pay rises, qualified teachers could expect to earn between 7,000 and 12,000 rands a year (between £4,000 and £7,430). Mr Ballard felt that despite the difference in living costs, South African salaries might not prove attractive enough.

He also felt that the National Union of Teachers in Britain might oppose recruitment on the ground that it would be aiding a system which applies apartheid in schools.

Mr Ballard said that the shortage of teachers in white schools, particularly in English-language schools, was critical enough. The shortage of qualified people to teach black pupils is enormous.

Dr Viljoen said that overseas recruitment had been discussed with provincial authorities, and despite some reservations he felt the plan should proceed provided there was discrimination against South African teachers. It was important to ensure that the principles of "Christian nationalism" embodied in the South African education system were not endangered.

He added that to win promotion teachers recruited abroad would have to learn Afrikaans. Mr Ballard said that despite the difficulties the plan should go ahead as it would "enrich the whole system."

US seeks support over Cuban intervention

By David Spanier

US diplomatic Correspondent American policy towards El Salvador has been clarified in further contacts between State department officials and the Reagan Office yesterday. The talks were a follow-up to last week's visit of Mr Lawrence Eagleburger, the designated Assistant Secretary for Europe. The main American objective, according to Mr Herman Cohen, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, is to mobilize international support against Cuban intervention in El Salvador, upheld with a renewed attempt to promote a dialogue between democratic forces in El Salvador.

Mr Cohen said in London yesterday that the Administration would be particularly pleased Mrs Margaret Thatcher declared foreign intervention in El Salvador to be unacceptable. The situation in El Salvador, in fact, he said, was one of the subjects discussed during talks with President Reagan at the White House on Monday, it emerged yesterday.

Mr Cohen left no doubt that the United States was taking a much more positive view of the present regime in El Salvador in the usual assessment in London. "Some people feel the

Government has lost its popular base," he said. "We feel it retains it. There is a considerable amount of support from democratic elements." While admitting that the Government had "narrowed", Mr Cohen cited younger Army officers and civilians who held democratic views, and said that President Duarte had legitimacy conferred on him by his previous election.

In the American view, the El Salvador regime is pursuing a constructive programme, including land reform with its direct help to the peasants, and wide economic and social development, in the difficult circumstances of attacks from the extreme right and extreme left. Accordingly, these democratic forces deserved support.

The Foreign Office is studying the mass of documentation supplied by the Americans on Cuban involvement in preparation of the talks in Washington.

"We want to make sure that the true picture of El Salvador is known," Mr Cohen added, explaining the purpose of his mission. "The pressure against outside intervention should be applied in the right direction, which means against Cuba." It was not the United States which was intervening militarily, he said, though noting that no options were closed.

Greeks turn away Soviet navy

From Mario Modiano
Athens, Feb 24

A state-controlled Greek shipyard whose ship repair arrangements with the Soviet Union raised eyebrows in to and Washington in September, 1979, is now offering Russians a renewed agreement for 1981 on condition that will exclude Soviet naval supply vessels.

The original agreement, signed between Neorion shipyard on the Aegean island of Poros, and Sudimport, a Soviet ship repair organization, provided for repair of both merchant ships and unarmed fleet supply vessels.

The arrangement angered the United States because it enabled the Soviet Union to extend the tour duty of auxiliary vessels of the Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean, which would otherwise have been forced to go to Black Sea yards for repairs. At the time differences had arisen over the military rejection of Greece in the NATO alliance. Momentarily it was expected that the shipyard agreement was a ploy to exert pressure on the West, but it came clear later that commercial considerations had motivated the Greeks. Under the earlier agreement, Neorion Shipyard received for repairs about a dozen Soviet ships of which two or three were fleet supply vessels. They were admitted after the green light was given by the Greek defence Ministry. In view of NATO's reactions, the Greek government rejected the military arm of the alliance last October. It was decided not to admit Soviet naval supply vessels for repairs. The Soviet organization has an old that the renewal will be valid only for merchant ships. The Russians have not revealed their displeasure, but their reply is still awaited.

In brief

UN plane was overloaded

Nairobi, Feb 24.—Tanzanian aviation authorities said a light aircraft which crashed on December 5, killing 10 people, including eight senior United Nations officials, was overloaded. Pilot error, broken instruments, and bad weather were also cited as reasons for the crash.

Eight shot dead

Managua, Feb 24.—At least four police and four English-speaking separatists died after exchanges of gunfire in Nicaragua's eastern province of Zelaya, a high-ranking government official said.

Train crash kills three

Bangkok, Feb 24.—Three people were killed and at least 10 injured when a Bangkok-bound passenger train was derailed in the southern Thai province of Surat Thani yesterday.

Boiler explodes

Tokyo, Feb 24.—One person was killed and several others injured when an engine room boiler in the 1,700-ton Japanese destroyer Yukikaze exploded while the ship was on a test run at the entrance to Tokyo Bay.

Korchnoi gambit

Hongkong, Feb 24.—Viktor Korchnoi, the exiled Soviet grand-master, said here that he is to lead an international chess team on a tour of China next month.

Rocket blows up

Stuttgart, Feb 24.—A United States military transporter carrying a rocket caught fire and blew up outside the village of Sechelsberg near here. No one was hurt.

Bomb wired to ANC car

From Our Correspondent
Lisbury, Feb 24

A bomb was discovered in a suburb under a car belonging to the representative of the African National Congress, the nationalist organisation banned in South Africa, since have disclosed. The bomb, made up of about 10 lb of TNT, was wired to

explode if the car was moved, a police spokesman said.

The car, belonging to Mr Joel Gcabi, was parked in the garage of a house occupied by a family who have left South Africa. Mr Gcabi has not returned last week and has not returned. The device is believed to have been placed under the car at the weekend.



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OVERSEAS

Poll setback
renews
doubts over
Hayden roleFrom Douglas Alton
Melbourne, Feb 24

The weekend's three by-election results have focused attention not so much on the Government's triumph, but more on the poor performance of the Labour Party.

Labour polled badly in all three, even though it increased its percentage of the vote in Curtin, the Western Australian seat. The explanation of Mr William Hayden, the Labour leader, that the Liberals did so well in the other two seats simply because they spent significantly more money has a thin ring to it. It has been said many times before and it was not mentioned by Mr Hayden during the campaigns.

Inevitably, the question of the Labour leadership has yet again been brought up, even before the vote-counting had been completed. Many pundits are now wondering whether Mr Robert Hawke, the former union leader, is going to make his bid for the Labour leadership before the 1983 general election.

Already, within a day of the by-elections, it is being widely suggested that now would be as good a time as any for Mr Hawke to do so.

The arguments are well worn, but convincing. For many years, according to the opinion polls, Mr Hawke has been the most respected and popular political figure in the country. He has hitherto been hampered by the fact that he was not officially a politician, but more a trouble-shooter during his 10 years as president of the Australian Council of the Trade Unions.

Last year he made his decision to enter politics and gained pre-selection for the safe Labour seat of Wills, in a working class area of Melbourne, and he subsequently entered Parliament at the October election.

He has since been appointed Labour's spokesman on industrial relations. Mr Hawke is dynamic, resolute, tough and charismatic. As union leader he was seen as something of a magician because of his ability to settle disputes.

Mr Hayden, on the other hand, has been something of a disappointment. Although no one has questioned his intelligence or his integrity, his problem is that he lacks appeal.

It is hard to argue that Labour would be worse off with Mr Hawke as leader and an increasing number of Labour members and supporters seem to think he could defeat Mr Malcolm Fraser, the Prime Minister, in 1983.

There seems to be no doubt that if Mr Hayden lost the 1983 election, Mr Hawke would take over as party leader, but there is increasing feeling that to wait until then is pointless. Present odds suggest Mr Hawke might take over some time this year.

Canadian Tory leader accuses
Mr Trudeau of trickery
over patriation of constitutionFrom John Best
Ottawa, Feb 24

Mr Joe Clark, Leader of the Conservative Opposition in the House of Commons, last night accused Mr Pierre Trudeau's Government of using trickery to achieve its goal of bringing home the Canadian constitution from Britain.

Mr Clark gave warning that if the Prime Minister gets his way the result would be a permanent residue of bitterness, particularly in western Canada, where all the provinces are against it.

"The result will have us looking around to the breaking of the confederation and perhaps the breaking of the nation itself," he said.

He was speaking in a Commons debate on a controversial resolution calling on Britain to surrender control over the British North American Act of 1867, Canada's constitution, after attaching an amending formula and a bill of rights.

Only about half the 102 Tory members sat in on the speech. That could be an ill omen for the youthful Mr Clark's chances of surviving an imminent leadership test.

Delegates to a party General meeting in Ottawa this weekend will be asked whether they favour holding a full leadership convention. If half of them say yes, Mr Clark must either step aside or face having to fight other candidates for his job.



Mr Joe Clark: Confederation in danger of breaking apart.

His main speech on the constitution was addressed to the 2,000 Tories whose votes could decide his fate this weekend as much as to the country at large. It was a good, sound speech, quite well argued, but lacking in fire.

He rejected as "simply absurd" that the federal system in Canada did not work. "There have been times, of course, when it prevented one man from getting his way," he added, looking sternly at Mr Trudeau across the aisle. "But that's its virtue. . . . Our system

of Government does work when ever reasonable leaders and Governments permit it to work."

He questioned whether the procedure being used by the federal Government was legitimate—whether it is legitimate to have one part of the partnership use trickery to change the rules of the whole partnership, against the wishes of the others.

"No one who travels in the west today can ignore the sense of grievance there or the degree to which that sense of grievance will be aggravated if both provinces are given second class status under our constitution."

"When all of the parties and Governments of the west and all of the provincial parties of Quebec stand together against a measure with the determination that we have seen, only the blind would believe that anger will pass away."

Canada's four western provinces all oppose Mr Trudeau's constitutional initiative, as do four of the other six provinces.

Under the amending formula proposed by Mr Trudeau, the two central provinces, Ontario and Quebec, veto over future constitutional change. The other provinces would have a veto only in certain conditions.

President Obote urged
to curb army violenceFrom Our Correspondent
Nairobi, Feb 24

Mr Paul Semogerere, the Ugandan opposition leader, has urged President Milton Obote to ensure better control of the Ugandan Army, which has been accused of killing and harassing civilians after recent attacks on police stations by two underground groups which say they want to overthrow Dr Obote.

Mr Semogerere and a delegation from his Democratic Party spent two hours in talks with Dr Obote at State House, Entebbe. They said to have had frank and free exchanges on security, agreeing that the recent attacks are not a popular uprising but the work of a small group of lawless elements.

Uganda radio said Mr Semogerere pledged his support to the Obote government in overcoming a threat to security, but asked for specific instances of army excesses to be investigated.

Two underground groups, the Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM) and the Movement of the Struggle for Political Rights (MSPR) claims to be associated with the recent attacks.

Mospor claims to be associated with the Uganda Patriotic Movement, a political party which contested the December elections and whose president, Mr Yoweri Museveni, has disappeared since the attacks.

The Sudanese authorities say about 5,000 Ugandans have recently crossed into southern Sudan to escape from the excesses of Ugandan soldiers who have been killing and harassing civilians in areas near the border.

Presidents of the three countries, who met in Kampala last month, agreed to speed up efforts to unscramble the complicated finances of the community. Dr Viktor Umbricht, a Swiss mediator, has prepared recommendations, under which Kenya would be required to pay large sums to the other two countries; but Kenya is understood to be contesting his proposals.

More people
flee from
VietnamFrom Our Correspondent
Hongkong, Feb 24

Recent arrivals in Hongkong from Vietnam say that there will be a renewed flow of refugees because of serious food shortages and military conscription.

A total of 452 "boat people" have arrived since the beginning of this year, twice as many as in the same period of last year.

Vietnamese authorities have tightened the surveillance of the escape routes, but members of a group of 70 who arrived yesterday, said that living conditions and food rations have deteriorated so sharply that Vietnamese families will risk their lives to escape.

Eastern European military personnel have already been diverted from Kampuchea to prevent refugees from crossing the northern border into China. Many local officials in that area have been accepting bribes.

One of the refugees said that escapees would begin seizing government vessels, usually manned by a crew of 12 who would collaborate with the refugees after rebelling against the two Hanoi officers in command. There are between 4,000 and 5,000 of these patrolling vessels along the coast.

The average price for escape is 6,000 dong (\$1,200) and the refugee spokesman said had taken him years of hard labour to acquire, as the average worker earned only about 65 dong a month, virtually all of which was needed for rationed food and upkeep. "Life is not worth living in Vietnam today," he added.

Social Focus

Worth examining, these new ideas
for sixth formers

The Manifesto for Change which was issued last week by 32 distinguished public figures including Lord Butler of Saferton Walden is timely in emphasizing that quality is what is important in schools. The declaration makes many wise observations but at one point implies that quality is somehow incompatible with examinations. It is true that examinations can distort the curriculum but it would be rash to deduce from this that they are a bad thing in themselves. At the sixth form level above all they are vital and they are closely associated with the idea of quality.

The main problem is narrowness of interests and the best way to solve this is by using the examination system in a constructive way. Ever since A-levels replaced the Higher School Certificate 30 years ago we have had an over-specialized curriculum in our sixth forms. This was not the result that the change was meant to bring about but it has turned out to be the price we pay for enabling students to graduate from our universities after only three years' study. Such a uniquely swift progression has only been possible by virtue of standards set by first-rate teaching in sixth forms and universities. There is a purposeful about it for which we are greatly indebted elsewhere in Europe and which it is important to preserve.

But the price need not be so high. It really ought not to be so difficult to encourage young people to be better more than just good. Quite apart from its wider implications the question is urgent in commercial terms. The British Overseas Trade Board has recently been emphasizing its concern at the neglect of foreign languages among our most able young people. Business leaders agree in the belief that greater ability to communicate would equip us to compete more forcefully in some of our overseas markets.

The many attempts to find a solution to the problem of over-specialization have failed, not least because alternative schemes have been too arcane to capture the public imagination. By contrast the proposal which is at present being considered by the education ministers is not at all simply a matter of A-level parents should find any difficulty in having an opinion about it.

It is that instead of following the present orthodoxy of three A-levels, sixth formers in schools and colleges should be offered the alternative of two A-levels and two

"half-A-levels". They could then have four, instead of three subjects as a preparation for higher education, business and the professions. Three of the subjects could continue to be closely related—maths, physics and chemistry for example. Those applying to universities would still have the two A-levels that are generally named as the requirement for their course. The third related subject would still be taken well beyond O-level. And there would be a fourth subject which could be something quite different, such as a modern language.

The great advantage of this idea is that it requires no tampering with A-level. It was because previous schemes involved replacing A-level with something less rigorous that they foundered. As it was, this tried and trusted examination had itself begun to appear inadequate. From the university point of view in particular it was not just a matter of preserving A-level but of restoring its failing reputation.

The loss of confidence in A-level had arisen largely because the innovations of the late Sixties and early Seventies had gone too far. Analyses by the Royal Society in mathematics and science and the various examining boards had disturbingly little in common. Consequently, many of those entering universities and polytechnics had not covered the basic ground which was necessary to ensure that they could get off to a good start in their degree studies.

During the past few years a great deal has been done to restore coherence to A-level. The examining boards are now very conscious of the importance of incorporating a common core of material in the A-level syllabuses of the major subjects and this will make life easier for many young people. After all, nearly 60 per cent of those who pass A-level Maths go to universities alone, never mind the additional numbers going to polytechnics. For physics and chemistry the proportions are considerably higher.

Removing the question marks over A-level has made it easier to think clearly about the "half-A" or intermediate level proposal. It is no longer a matter of introducing a controversial package of new examinations which would leave most people bewildered, but rather of introducing a modest element of flexibility which could gain acceptance gradually and so

bring about changes, in the time-honoured British way, without upheaval.

When the Department of Education and Science issued its Green Paper, *Examinations 16-18* last October, it was very concerned that the universities and the employers would give their support to the intermediate-level proposal. Both have done so. The CBI has supported the idea and the universities have been more prepared to welcome it than any other such proposal in the past 20 years. In addition, the examining boards are confident that they could make it work in practice.

The one misfortune is that the I-level scheme has come to be fore at a time of anxiety over staffing cuts. It is an atmosphere in which some representatives of the schools are unlikely to be well disposed to new ideas to help the more able, particularly as there are now considerable numbers of non-A level sixth formers for whom something different is needed. So they could well be tempted to dismiss the proposal as irrelevant and at best only worth considering as a trade-off for the injection of more money.

To take this view would be to magnify the problem. Obviously the scope for teaching for the new examination would vary from school to school, depending on the resources available. But it would be very surprising if any school were totally incapable of introducing any intermediate-level courses. After all it could well be possible to do the teaching jointly with A-level work and this could prove to be a more economical use of teachers. In any case we are talking about how the sixth form curriculum will look in a few years' time when the staffing situation may be very different.

The great danger is that recriminations about expenditure cuts could obscure constructive thinking about what is best for sixth formers and for the country in the longer run. Another short step and this serious educational question could be reduced to the level of political rhetoric. That would be the end of the proposal and it would be a sorry reason for keeping our most able young people in an unnecessary straitjacket.

Arthur Hearnden

The author, who is Secretary of the Standing Conference on University Entrance, is writing here in a personal capacity.

Why Wandsworth pensioners are angry
about these unkind cuts

Pensioners in Wandsworth are seeking a meeting with Mr Michael Heseltine, Secretary of State for the Environment, to protest at the way cuts in services will affect them.

They are angry, not simply because a number of services on which they have relied are being cut, but because of the insensitive way they say they are being carried out. For example, they have been closed down a slipper bath which had been used by pensioners living in bed-sitters and those who were afraid of running up fuel bills to heat enough water for baths at home. They were told they could use their free bus passes to go to another borough where slipper baths remained open.

The Conservatives, who took control in 1978, promised in their manifesto to expand luncheon clubs for old people, yet five out of the ten are due to be closed by April. Again, pensioners have been told to use their bus passes to go to one that remains open.

The hours of amenities like the public library are also being reduced, so pensioners can no longer use them as much as they used to. And quiet and warm places to pass a few hours. The number and hours of public lavatories, holidays and day trips for the elderly are being cut, while the services that remain cost them more. Meals have gone up from 65p to 45p—four times the increase planned in 1978.

Such services may seem unimportant to some councillors, but to pensioners struggling with rising rents, rates and fuel bills, they represent a real reduction in living standards. They fear, too, that reductions in the home help service, the gardening, window cleaning service, and of social service staff helping the frail elderly at home will precipitate them into residential homes or geriatric hospitals at greater cost to the community.

Alice Regan, aged 79, who was born in Wandsworth, worked until she was 65 and now has a small civil service pension on top of her state pension. She pays income tax, but receives rebates on her rent and rates. But since the rebates are proportional, she has to meet part of

the extra cost herself and can get no help with her heating bills.

"People just over the margin are penalized," she said. "We are reduced to begging after working all our lives. There is no encouragement to get a higher standard of living."

The Wandsworth Pensioners' conference, which meets regularly, carried out a survey earlier this year which found that 57 per cent of pensioners did not have enough money for heating bills, and a quarter could meet neither their rent nor food bills without going without another essential.

But Sylvia Campbell, aged 69, who suffers from arthritis and cares for the daily needs of a helpless friend aged 93, has had her own home help's hours cut. It will mean eventually that she will have to give up one of the two old people's clubs she also helps to run. It must be cheaper, she said, to give a proper home help service than take old people into homes.

The feelings of pensioners are mirrored by the attitudes of senior social services staff, whose morale is low. They feel that cuts are being imposed without thought to priorities, and that the social services will be reduced to dealing only with crises. "One children's home head told me: 'They are simply cutting by numbers. They do not care what the effects on the services are, or that children it has taken months to build up a relationship with are now insecure again, wondering if they can stay in their present home or even with their brothers and sisters.'"

What distresses the staff most is that Wandsworth has gradually built up a good service from a relatively low base in the past few years, with room for development, innovation and prevention work. It had become a borough where good staff were attracted from elsewhere.

But the cuts are of such a scale that staff feel they are being pushed into a "barricade mentality of social work", where even essential services will be maintained with difficulty. Such comments are not shared by all, however, and they are endorsed by outsiders in this case.

Margaret Robinson, head of the social

work course at Chelsea College, believes the decision to close down the social services training department at Wandsworth will have wide implications across West London.

Dr E. Metzger, a consultant psychiatrist attached part-time to the Brompton day centre for the mentally ill, believes its impending closure has already caused two patients to be readmitted to the local psychiatric hospital. Further unnecessary admissions will follow, so will more suicide attempts and an increase in mental illness in the borough, he said.

The closure of the centre will reduce to 35 the day places available in Wandsworth, although guidelines laid down by the Department of Health and Social Security suggest the borough needs 152. It is being closed, according to Mr Edward Lister, chairman of social services, because it has been underused and because of the need for overall cuts.

The social services budget for 1981-82 is to be cut by £2.4 million, about 9 per cent according to official council calculations. Officers argue that this is nearer to 12 per cent, but both figures contrast with the Government projection of a 1 per cent cent figure for next year.

Mr Lister says Wandsworth is treating departments equally in the face of cuts of between £7 to £8 million in the borough's rate support grant and the massive increase in rates that will flow from that and from the increase in the precept for the Inner London Education Authority.

He puts the other side of the argument: pensioners, luncheon clubs, he maintains, are being closed because they were under-used, while the extra charges for meals will not cover their costs and will be lower than elsewhere in London. The social services training department is being closed because it is an expensive operation, but the central training department will continue.

But the department has notched up one victory in its campaign against the cuts. Mr Lister admits that the assessment centre at Earlfield children's home is successful and will be continued, but in another setting.

Pat Healy
Social Services Correspondent

Manila jets blamed for attack on junks

From Our Correspondent
Hongkong, Feb 24

Philippine Air Force jet fighters were blamed for a recent attack on three Hongkong fishing junks which were anchored in international waters about 200 miles west of Manila.

Six bombs were dropped in low-dive attacks but only one hit, a junk. It did not explode, but made a hole in the hull. Two-thirds of the engine-room was filled with water and the three

engines were knocked out before the pumps began to operate.

Three members of the crew and three Filipino fishermen seeking water were on board but escaped injury. The other 20 members of the crew and fishermen from the other two junks were fishing in sampans some distance from the attacked vessels.

After working overnight to pump out the water and plug

the hole made by the 2 ft-long missile marked "CTIT", the crew of the crippled junk sailed home to Hongkong escorted by the other two.

The attack was made on Thursday but the junks did not reach Hongkong until Monday morning.

Hongkong marine police are still examining the junk but it is taken for granted that the fighters belonged to the Philippine Air Force

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Health: is insurance the answer?

The Government's plans to find an alternative way of financing the Health Service have receded into the middle distance. Despite the enthusiasm of Dr George Mervin, Minister of Health, ministers now accept that no legislation providing for any radical refinancing of the National Health Service will be possible in this Parliament.

The timetable now involves a discussion document later this year or early next, a public debate and possibly a manifesto commitment to an alternative scheme for the next election.

For both ministers and civil servants have learnt that the closer other countries' systems of health insurance are examined, the more difficult it becomes to find a way of grafting such a system into the existing NHS without damaging the often unsung virtues of the present system which ministers are adamant they wish to maintain.

What is being sought now is ideas. A Department of Health and Social Security working party is examining what one civil servant has dubbed "Heinz 57"—the wide variety of methods, largely insurance-based, by which other countries finance their health care.

Ideas are being drawn from the Centre for Policy Studies, and an eager eye is kept on any signs of a debate about alternative methods in universities, the medical journals and the lay press.

The Department of Health, however, seems no nearer designing even an outline insurance-based system that

stands a real chance of raising extra funds for the NHS without swallowing them in extra bureaucracy than it was when the Tories took office.

A recent background paper put to ministers is full of questions about what would be practicable or desirable, but it is notable for a lack of answers, and the statement that it will be some years before conclusions can be drawn on how the existing system can be modified.

The situation is complicated by the fact that ministers want a broad consensus over any change they introduce, being determined to avoid creating the sort of political football that pensions became in the 1960s and early 1970s, with all the uncertainty that would create.

Given the Labour Party's commitment to a tax-based NHS, such consensus is hard to envisage. In essence there seems to be only two real possibilities. One is tinkering with the existing balance between the private and public sectors to the former's advantage, so that extra money goes into health care by voluntary private insurance. The Government has already adopted this course. Restrictions on private hospital building have been eased, the removal of pay beds has been halted, and the NHS is being encouraged to use private beds on contract, to lease unused facilities to the private sector, to undertake joint planning, joint purchasing and even joint management with private hospitals.

The logical extension of that would be tax concessions on health insurance contributions, which would provide still greater growth to the private insurance sector, which has already almost doubled in size in two years and now covers more than 3.5 million people. That course the Government could well adopt.

The other alternative is a switch to full-blown state-backed compulsory health insurance, covering perhaps family doctors and acute hospital services, leaving the mentally ill and handicapped, geriatric care and the chronically ill to be financed from general taxation.

Such a system brings with it the problems of collecting premiums, and of assessing the charge of perhaps 40 per cent of the population the young, the old, the chronically ill and the pregnant—would not pay. It would also bring the problem of controlling costs, something that has bedevilled virtually every insurance-based system in the past decade. Betting within the Department of Health is 70-30 against the idea being adopted.

To introduce it ministers have found, somewhat to their horror, that a fundamental change would be needed in the way the NHS handles its budget. The current system, designed to save broad budgetary control and to stop people putting their hands in the till, cannot in general provide costings for individual operations, procedures and courses of treatment. Such information would almost certainly be needed for

an insurance-based system. Doctors and administrators would then have a much clearer idea of what the treatment they give an individual actually costs.

To remedy a situation in which one transplant surgeon, for example, prescribed drugs costing £1 million a year without being aware of their cost, a joint DHSS/NHS working party is studying ways of providing data on day-to-day costs. Ministers are planning to get charges for NHS pay beds in hands related to a hospital's actual costs—rather than at present relating them to whether the bed is in a teaching hospital or not. This, ministers believe, would make consultants more aware of the charges they had to make. It would encourage them to keep them competitive with neighbouring hospitals, position that could have knock-on effect on the costs of NHS beds in which the same services are provided.

Such approaches could lead to better value for money and this with greater cost awareness is one of the driving forces encouraging ministers to look at insurance-based systems. With health spending at £10,000m a year, it may be out that the question is not how to do it but how to do it better.

Introducing a system the benefits of which cannot be guaranteed, but how do we spend the massive sum of money better?

Nicholas Timmins

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|-------------|-----|------|-----|----|----|------------------------------|
| unwarranted | 180 | 1.90 | C1d | an | -6 | "complete" new snow with ice |
| unwarranted | 50 | 1.90 | C1d | an | -6 | Lower since limited persons |
| warm-up | 11 | 1.70 | C1d | an | -6 | new snow with ice |
| | | | | | | Access road |
| | | | | | | 2,000ft. |

THE ARTS

A gloomy spectrum of man's inhumanity

Berlin
To say that the Berlin Film Festival runs like clockwork would be an understatement, since the event was this year organized, with wonderful German efficiency, by computer, sweeping away all (or almost all) the queues and confusion which in the past have been endemic to every major festival. But computers do not make pictures: and good films in Berlin this year were by and large as hard to seek out as needles in haystacks. It may simply be a poor vintage for films; it may be that Berlin suffers by coming too close before Cannes, with every country saving its best for the senior event. Nothing can have been helped, either, by the renewal of hostility towards the festival by the young German filmmakers, who feel that the competition does not do all it might for the German cinema. Certainly the single German competition entry—an artfully lumbering absurdist morality play, *Erwin der Neger*, by the Bavarian director Herbert Achternbusch—did nothing at all to win friends for German cinema or the festival.

Taking the whole spectrum of films on show in Berlin in fact comprises a series of parallel and even competitive events: as well as the competition there are the Young Film Forum, information and children's sections and a New German Cinema event, film-makers the world over seem currently haunted by the theme of man's inhumanity to his own kind.

There was, for example, a special screening of Dieter Hildebrandt's *Der gelbe Stern*—the 1945 documentary, *Die Judenverfolgung*—recounting the whole story of Hitler's Jewish programme. We are by now familiar with every image of the horrors filmed in the extermination camps. This intelligent new presentation, however, deals more fully than previous films with the attitude, in particular, to the Jews, material on the infamous burning of the books, and Goebbels' exultation at this symbol of cultural extermination. Heine's prediction is confirmed: "Where books were burnt, humans would be burnt too."

The Jewish question came up elsewhere: in Jeanne Meerapfel's admired first feature, *Malou*, the chronicle of a Jewish family under and after Hitler; in Rainer Werner Fassbinder's suitably lurid, founded-on-fact *Lili Marleen* (sic), now in its fifth week in the Berlin cinemas; and in Frans Weisz's *Charlotte*, a visually exquisite but structurally chaotic account of the life of Charlotte Salomon, a young painter who died in a Jewish extermination camp.

One of the best films in the competition, the Swiss director Markus Imhoof's *The Box Is Full*, puts the bizarre and terrible story of racial persecution

Sreela Majumdar in Miral Sen's *Anatomy of a Mind*

In a new light, incidentally shattering the conventional picture of neutral Switzerland as a haven of calm sense and humanity.

A little group of Jews escaping from a Nazi transport cross the border into Switzerland, and seek shelter in the village café. The proprietress is a reluctant kind; her husband is dutiful and reports the affair to the police. The local policeman is a good deal happier returning them—old men, women and children—to certain death than risking going against his book of instructions. The outstanding quality of this film, the director, is that the people, refugees and their "hosts" alike—are viewed not as groups but as people, with their individual unpredictability and human failings. One scene sums up much of what the film is about: the café lady has given a Jewish child a postcard to mail the news to a friend that she is now safe. Afterwards, when the child has been sent back to captivity, the woman providently soaks the stamp off the card which it is now too late to send.

Other forms of group-oppression, less murderous perhaps but still persistent, came under scrutiny. In competition, Claude Goretta's *La Provinciale* portrays a talented provincial girl (Nathalie Baye) who comes to Paris only to discover the full threat of both male chauvinism

and feminist over-reaction. From East Europe, the Hungarian László Lugossy's *Thanks, We're Getting Along* presents a working-class couple, imprisoned by economic insufficiency and ineradicable social custom which limits their relationship to that of proprietor and chanel.

The best film about feminism and race, however, was certainly Connie Field's *Rosie the Riveter*. The title comes from a popular song of the Forties, when American women were being lured into war industry with promises and propaganda about the glamour and patriotism of the task and the conditions and prospects they would be offered.

In this fine documentary official films and *March of Time* reports are contrasted with the recollections of the women themselves—how they were underpaid, discriminated against sexually and racially, exploited, and finally sent back to the domestic ghettos when they became an embarrassment to an over-stocked labour market. Even though it all happened nearly forty years ago, the experiences of these women affirm their present-day testimony. *Apart from the laudable fascination of its content, the film is also very lively and often funny—which probably explains the disapproval of those hard-line feminist film-makers who favour*

a strategy of tracts to bore the pants off.

Films on homosexuality were much to the fore; and here the attitudes were predominantly dispirited and dispiriting. The protagonists of two Norwegian films—an over-coloured story about a two-man, one-woman ménage, *Life and Death*, and a drama of a schoolteacher wrongfully accused of raping a child, *The Execution*—meet violent ends at the hands of an ignorant and hostile society.

On the other hand a remarkable CBS documentary *Gay Power—Gay Politics* shows a hardly less disturbing version to the coin. As the homosexual population of San Francisco increases by accelerating migration, the one-time oppressed minority (following a classical historical pattern) uses newfound civic power to introduce its own kinds of repression and revenge.

Claude Farraldo's *Deux Lions au soleil*, from France, is a much more careful view of things: a farce about a homosexual couple whose exploits as muggers go farcically astray, and who end up going straight, in every sense of the word.

The most rational and reassuring film about homosexuality is *Frank Ripplow's Taxi am Clou*, which won most hearts (as well as the Max Ophüls Prize) in Berlin by its easy frankness and good humour. Ripplow, a former teacher who lost his job

on account of his sexual instincts, cheerfully accepts the facts, grave and gay, of homosexuality, and examines the essentially human problems of a loving couple of incompatible temperaments. Ripplow, playing his own leading character, portrays himself as a sexual adventurer who cannot accommodate himself to his gentle, loving, home-making partner.

Among films dominated by nagging anxieties, Miral Sen's *Anatomy of a Mind* stands out by its much larger view of cultural and social collision. An Indian film crew arrives in a remote village where they intend to make a film about the great famine of 1943. Their attempts to recreate the anguish of the past are constantly overtaken, however, by the problems of the present: suspicion, ignorance, intolerance, economic want, above all a total and inevitable failure of communication between the people from the city and their rural hosts. The film crew return to Calcutta defeated, empty-handed, confused, but very little the wiser.

Sen commits the (for him) uncharacteristic fault of being too long and sometimes obscure. This was still one of the liveliest works on show in Berlin, with its vigour and its often comic juxtaposition of the worlds of reality and movie make-believe.

David Robinson



Piero Cappuccilli

Better a live Pompey than a dead Cynil Tricycle

Irving Wardle

I was waiting for the moment when the Women's Company would explain their cryptic title, but they never do; and, if anything, their Stevie Smith musical evening goes to show the opposite. From this selection from the poems it seems that, although Stevie Smith was usually quite happy, she always felt it would be more interesting to be somewhere else, in her coffin, for instance.

Amanda Fisk's set strikes a note somewhere between a children's party and the no-nonsense of Highgate Cemetery. There is a cheerful mess of familiar belongings framed by three funeral parlours, one of them guarded by a cast-iron cat; and the evening consists

largely of switchback rides between life's little pleasures and equally friendly handwaves to the grim reaper.

That, it seems to me, gets the tone exactly right; and the company further illuminate their subject by splitting up the poet's different aspects between four actresses: the overpoweringly confident Clare McIntyre; the sexually outcast Marilyn Milgrom; the eccentrically sane Susan Glanville; and Stephanie Nunn, who comes over as the eternal schoolgirl besides writing the show's music and playing it on the piano, cor anglais, and midge recorder.

The music is the making of the show. It would be hard to devise a theatrical event from the poems alone, as they are communally funny, you into areas of Highgate Cemetery. There is a cheerful mess of familiar belongings framed by three funeral parlours, one of them guarded by a cast-iron cat; and the evening consists

of a switchback ride between life's little pleasures and equally friendly handwaves to the grim reaper.

Most of the spoken material comes over with impish vitality; particularly when addressed to a stage partner, or when the gentle old lady shows her claws ("In the desolate night/I think only of the people I should like to bite"). But it is in the cymbal bashing finale, the operatically heightened Arthurian, or the beaming Miss Glanville's unsimulating report, "Just a Girl that Men Forget" that the programme gets into its stride.

Not to mention the cheerful invalid in "The Deserter", rollickingly backed up with Kerbel's *Monastery Garden* until she whips off her hospital shawl and discloses a picnic spread inside it.

Semele St John's/Radio 3

William Mann

It was the BBC's turn on Monday to give a concert for the European Broadcasting Union. Keen, perhaps, to show off its prowess in the stylish performance of eighteenth-century music, we chose an English, dramatic, non-sacred oratorio, Handel's *Semele*, which John Eliot Gardiner conducted with his Monteverdi Choir, an excellent team of principal singers, and the English Baroque Soloists as their accompanying orchestra.

The operation successfully demonstrated to listeners overseas, I hope, that Handel's oratorios are not necessarily saccharine sentimentalism, in the bad old Messiaen tradition, but light, and pace.

Even here, the cause is not won, as witness Mozart's operas at Covent Garden, half-stylized at best. This *Semele* was a cogent lesson in propaganda and a decently authentic, enjoyable Handel style, life-enhancing as in my youth, Handel under Beecham or Sargent promised loathing and boredom, not to mention dreadful singing.

British listeners could complain that the expense of other equally marvellous oratorios by Handel: I wrote about a Prom performance last September, though with different forces, and only one of Monday night's singers.

Anthony Rolfe Johnson sang "Where are you walking?" more beautifully now than then, though elsewhere he suggested a less than ideal Lord of the Gods and supreme lover.

I could not but remember how delectable was the Semele of Felicity Lott last summer, and how vengeful Sarah Walker's Juno. Here we had Eiddwen Harri, warmly romantic yet ideally true in "O Sleep, why dost thou leave me?" with pungent lute and organ accompaniment. Della Jones also turned her imperious alto register to splendid effect as Juno in "Hence, Iris", which she decorated as to the manner born.

Rolfe Johnson did grace the occasion with humour and brilliance and athletic pace in "I must with Speed", an aria in which the Lord of the Gods had to remind himself that he is not to behave fallibly. Cypri's solo, "Come, Zephyrus, come", omitted from the first performance, was rightly included, charmingly and neatly sung by Elizabeth Fraydon in a suitably boyish soprano voice.

Must mention Nicholas Kraemer's tactful yet spirited harpsichord playing, and the curious accident which removed the right-hand stereo channel in the first act.

Some of the reviews on this page are reprinted from yesterday's later editions.

No Names No Medals Jeannette Cochrane

Ned Chaillet

Joan Smith is a teacher at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts. He is also the author and director of *No Names... No Medals*, a play which he undertakes "A Story of the SAS". More than a story of the Special Air Service, it is a conjuncture about the siege of the Iranian Embassy, and its effects on the soldiers who attacked it so successfully. For the purposes of more dramatic conjecture, he recruited students from RADA to perform his play at the Jeannette Cochrane Theatre.

Despite the students, there is nothing unprofessional about the performance. In fact, Mr Smith has drawn four intensely physical and imposing performances from the central actors, performances such as rarely occur in the British theatre outside a Steven Berkoff production. As they torture one another, exercise and exercise, they also speak Mr Smith's lines which are meant to give them separate identities reflecting the diver-

sity of class and background within the SAS. That demanding opening sequence is engrossing, but Mr Smith is shortly dramatizing his ideas and that is somewhat less compelling.

Without naming the Iranian siege, he recreates it. The four Glanville's unsimulating report, "Just a Girl that Men Forget" that the programme gets into its stride.

Mr Smith's play is not boring, but it lacks the moral rigour, and intensity of Tom Kempster's *Flashpoint*. It is neither fiction enough nor documentary enough to be anything other than ambiguous. Although the SAS characters remain unnamed, I can tell you their names. They are Colum Conway, Paul McGann, Bruce Payne and Craig Pinder, and in two months they will be looking for professional work.

Tear/Luxon Sadler's Wells

Hilary Finch

The parlour palm, which, with the aspidistra, has become familiar vegetation for Robert Tear and Benjamin Luxon, returned to the desert on Monday as the setting for a song that spun the spell of a nineteenth-century far Arabia. It was one of the high points in an evening of Victorian "Adventure on Land and Sea", the first of three entertainments by Tear and Luxon as part of a week of concerts at the Wells.

The fact that Benjamin Luxon had sung "The Desert" only once before doubtless accounted for the sharper edge of true vocal and dramatic adventure it had over some of the evening's more familiar ditties.

The recital as a whole showed that, even for such seasoned balladeers, it is never quite as easy as it seems, a century later, to recreate those songs artfully without resorting to the aid of either scented nostalgia or cynical mockery masked in high

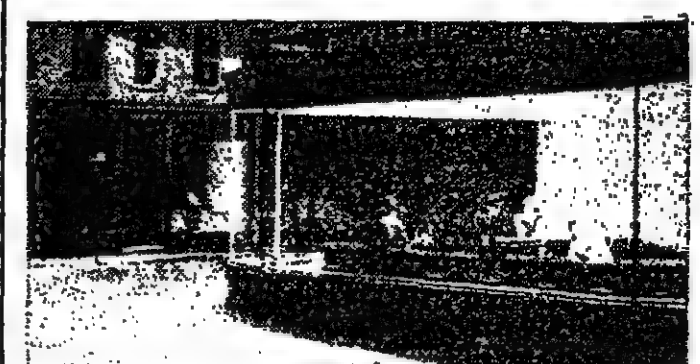
camp. Not that Tear and Luxon ever quite fall into either of those traps; but on Monday there was, particularly in Tear's "The Desert", too much enervating vocal gushing and clichéd gesture.

Mr Tear was the guiltier party, relying too much on wowing by gesture alone; how much more effective was his singing when he let the words and music speak more for themselves in Dido's "Tom Bowling" and "The Snowy Breasted Pearl", both sung with elegance and firmly sustained tone.

Mr Luxon's "Wreck of the Hesperus" showed what, at a performing level, could and should be done: as by his accompanied recitation, "Dan McGrew", he took care to build and sustain the narrative compellingly through the blending of a wide range of colours in his vocal palette, helped not a little by John Constable, who touched in the details with disarming nonchalance.

Elsewhere his playing tended to be a little prim; that was not without its effect in an evening whose music making, to paraphrase one from whose combination of sophistication and panache the trio can still learn, was not quite serious enough not to be taken seriously.

Edward Hopper



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Simon Boccanegra Bayerische Staatsoper

Kenneth Loveland

Munich has profited greatly from the instinctive partnership of Otto Schenk and Jürgen Rose. Their beautifully imagined *Der Rosenkavalier* of

1973 won a corner in operatic history, still exerts its charms and will again be a pillar of the Munich Festival in July. Their *Simon Boccanegra* is even older, dating from 1971, but is among the Bayerische Staatsoper's more precious jewels with a similar sturdy capacity for survival.

It is undergoing a major revival in which it stands like a monument to Schenk's gift for expressing the essentials of a work through the conflict of personalities, and to Rose's for creating designs that blend style with atmosphere and relevance.

In an interview on this page in January, 1975, Schenk stated a preference for expressing his ideas through singing actors rather than by dealing with concepts. He might have cited *Simon Boccanegra* in illustration. People is what this production is about, and they are thrust forcefully into a revealing focus with a sharp identity of outline.

It is, of course, an opera ideally suited to his purpose.

Its heart is located in the great series of duets, beginning with Fiesco's stern rejection of Boccanegra in the prologue, and coming full circle in the tragedy of belated reconciliation. These confrontations are the recurring highlights of Schenk's production, each one telling us something new about the characters, each one an argument that holds us absorbed.

Schenk preserves a balance of time and people. We detect domestic dilemmas within great events, observe idealism cutting through the squabbling in the council chamber as Boccanegra's plea for unity assumes a prophetic vision. In shaping a sense of the epic, Rose's sets, with their Genoese loggias and arches and distant sea vistas of a maritime republic, play a substantial part.

Munich's production now gains from a conductor who clearly agrees with Schenk about the positioning of emphasis, for it is precisely in the accompaniment to the duets

that Riccardo Chailly finds ways of reinforcing the flow of stage exchanges with tensions tightly controlled, then dramatically released, all realized through highly expressive orchestral playing.

The cast is a distinguished one, headed by Piero Cappuccilli's Boccanegra, a figure of authority, nobly sung and roundly characterised, moving easily from the affection of newly discovered fatherhood to the fury of denunciation. Mirella Freni is an eloquent Maria, the voice soaring richly. Nicolai Ghiaurov's Fiesco is a steadily sustained. Schenk avoids the pitfall of making him too old in the prologue.

At the performance I attended, Michael Svetlev was a last-minute replacement for the indisposed Veriano Luchetti. He sang passionately, and for the greater part of the evening camouflaged with high professionalism the fact that he was singing from a score placed conveniently among the properties.

Book review

Choiseul

Vol. I, Father and Son, 1719-54

By Rohan Butler

(Oxford, £48)

Do you enjoy ample leisure? Do you live quietly in the country with little or no social life? Is your library your favourite room and, above all, does your library chair possess one of those excellent book rests that swivel from an arm? And is your passion history?—good old-fashioned history that moves inexorably from day to day, month to month, year to year? If so, buy this enormous book—it will last you for weeks and it will rarely fail to entertain.

Mr Rohan Butler has written half a million words and so far he has dealt with the social and political apprenticeship of Choiseul and with most, though far from all, of his father's life (he died in 1769). When the book ends, Choiseul is about to enter his long years as the dominant minister of France locked in a far-flung struggle for empire with Britain: indeed, having experienced Mr Butler's technique over 1,000 pages, it is unthinkable that he could get through these later years without writing another million words, possibly more.

Mr Butler is a leisurely writer who loves detail. When he describes Stainville (the home of Choiseul's family) he writes charmingly of the pear trees, giving their names, and takes us through the field names, the dependent villages, the woods and copses—page after page, like the setting of a nineteenth century novel. When a character enters the narrative, the complex generalities of the French aristocracy are carefully delineated so that we shall not confuse our Bassompierres nor fail to recall

that the only son of one was possibly dead. Indeed the book is so endlessly discursive, that readers with little leisure will get impatient with it. A pity if the minor princes: nevertheless a man of quality married to a wife of pungent temperament. They lived busy, subtle lives of the minor aristocracy—hardworking, reasonably cultured, and connected with noble well open for the whiff of possible patronage—an admirable background for their gifted son, if somewhat dim to read about.

Choiseul himself was very able, socially adroit, sexually adventurous, especially with intelligent duchesses who might further his career; he possessed a real love of painting and early in life began to collect Dutch pictures which, however, was also in the main stream of aristocratic fashion. Like so many politicians of outstanding ability he was a man who responded deeply to human beings and to the expression of humanity in art and literature. And yet in spite of his delight in power and his unquenchable pleasure in the arts of love, he retained a detachment that was the result of his overwhelming ambition. Nothing displays the cool calculation of his temperament more than his marriage, at the age of thirty-one, to an heiress of twelve. Alas, in this volume, he is more often out of it than in it.

His triumphs and disasters as the leading minister of France in the difficult years of the mid-eighteenth century will, presumably, be the theme of the next million words from Mr Butler's pen. Let us hope that he does not become more loquacious with age. However if you can afford it and have the leisure, give yourself up to volume one—you will be amply, very amply rewarded.

J. H. Plumb

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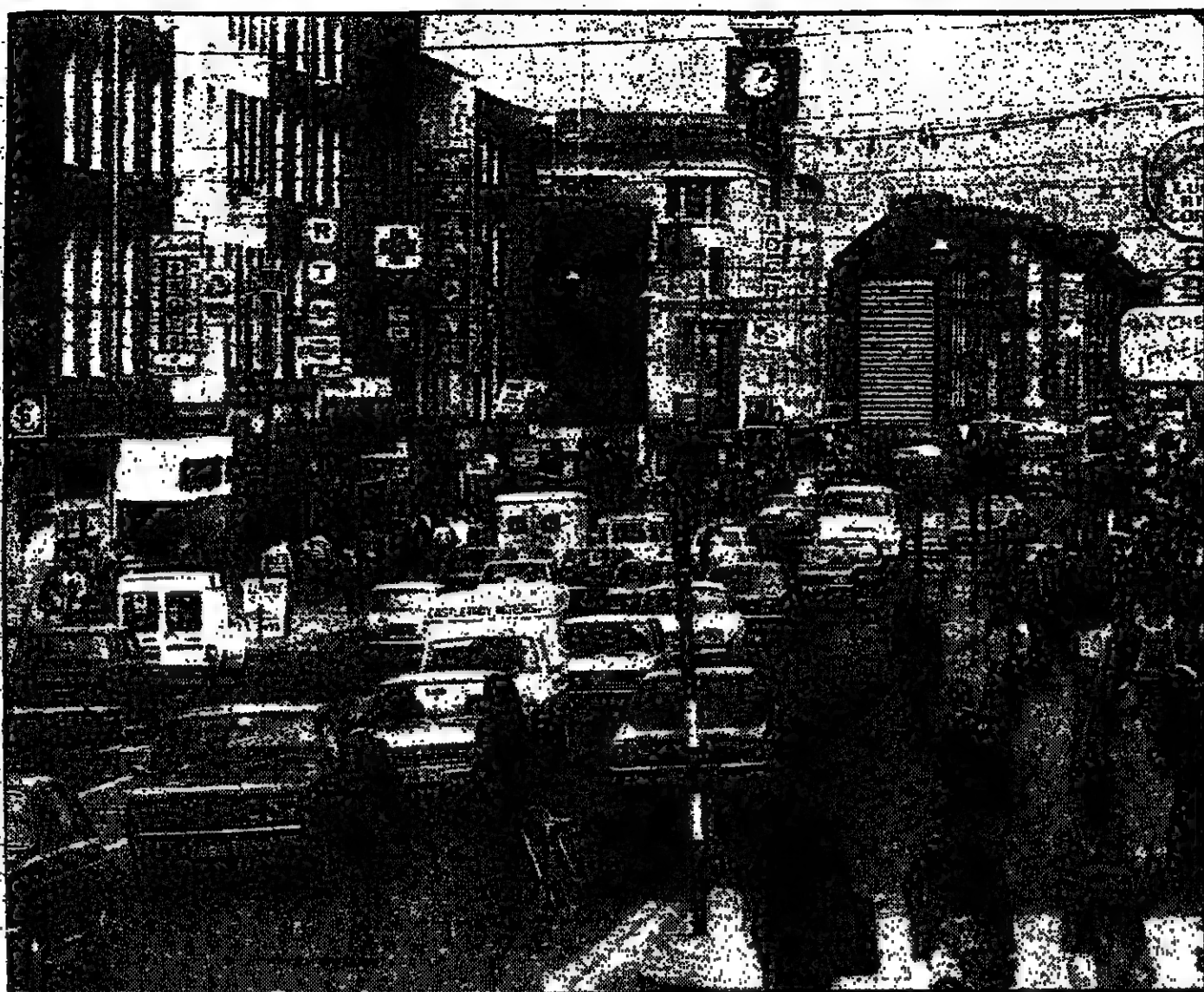
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REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Irish ardour for the EEC is now distinctly cooler. This report examines relations with Europe and the latest state of Anglo-Irish understanding



Contrasting views of Limerick, south-west Ireland. The busy central area of the most important city in the Republic after Dublin and Cork. Right: looking across the River Shannon towards the city.

Dublin Castle talks elevated relations with Britain to a new plane

On a bitterly cold, clear morning on December 8 last, a helicopter carrying Mrs Margaret Thatcher, Lord Carrington and Sir Geoffrey Howe landed on the lawn of Dublin Castle. The 100 or so journalists who had been "bussed" in from the Irish origin Office in central Dublin, bearing credentials and photographs on their belts, had no idea what a momentous occasion they were witnessing.

Despite the perhaps deliberately different interpretations that were put on the occasion by the Irish and British Governments, the five hours of talks between the British delegation and Mr Charles Haughey, the Irish Prime Minister, and some of his top ministers, were certainly of historic importance.

Mr Haughey is perfectly right to claim that the summit elevated Anglo-Irish relations to a new plane. There were some phrases in the joint communiqué issued afterwards that have been seized on by the increasingly insecure Unionists in northern Ireland, such as the declaration that the total relationship would be discussed in the joint studies at the two Governments agreed to establish.

To the Unionists, such talk smacked of betrayal. Mr Thatcher has subsequently insisted that the constitutional position of Northern Ireland is not being threatened, but that has not been enough to placate the wrath

of the Reverend Ian Paisley or the more restrained concern of his bitter rival, Mr James Moynihan.

Do the Unionists really have anything to fear? One gets a distinct feeling that something, definitely is up, but precisely what can only be guessed at; perhaps the British Government does not even know. Perhaps Mrs Thatcher may have decided simply that she is going to try another approach and see where it leads.

The first tangible effect of the summit, apart from the impact it had on Unionist opinion, was to involve a number of British Government departments in the preparation of ideas for inclusion in the joint studies.

That, in itself, proves Mr Haughey's claim to have put Anglo-Irish relations on to a different plane, because hitherto any joint enterprise with Dublin were worked out almost exclusively by officials from the Northern Ireland Office. A lot of senior officials with no knowledge of dealing with Ireland, therefore, are having a novel experience.

Mrs Thatcher decided to try a new approach largely because of the humiliating collapse of the Government's political initiative in Northern Ireland. The exercise ended ignominiously towards the end of last year after many months of painstaking work by Mr Humphrey Atkins, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, became impatient. Exactly what

went on inside the Cabinet nobody knows, although rumours are plentiful. There was some suggestion that Lord Carrington felt that it was time to "do a Rhodesia" but the word in informed circles is that he has no particular interest in the Irish question; certainly he has no desire to succeed Mr Adams in the most thankless job in the Cabinet.

It can be said, therefore, that Mrs Thatcher and Mr Haughey have established a level of accord that transcends anything seen before. Mr Haughey's Government has incurred the politically embarrassing tirades of Mr Neil Blaney and others over the huge sums it is spending on border security—certainly a lot of people find it hard to understand why the Irish Government is willing to spend tens of millions of pounds a year to help to secure a border it does not want. That is a simplistic viewpoint, but it is what a lot of voters think.

Mr Haughey will go to the polls this year able to boast that he has taken the British Government a step down the road to unity, although, if he is to be genuine, he will be too astute to say it in those blunt terms. The last thing he wants is to embarrass the British Government.

The joint communiqué was a political success for Mr Haughey, because he was able genuinely to point to the fact that the British are at last beginning to look beyond the border in the search for a political solution.

It is now obvious that the British Government has no intention of launching a new initiative, certainly not in a purely Ulster context. The obstinacy of the Unionists in not yielding to the Government's desire for a power sharing assembly and executive has made such an exercise pointless. Mrs Thatcher is clearly out to demonstrate that the old days of majority rule, in which so much of today's troubles are rooted, are over.

In Dublin there is a general feeling that Mr Haughey will sweep the board in the general election, but some cautionary notes ought to be sounded. The economy is in a shambles, and Fine Gael repeatedly gives warning that the country may in a few years find itself appealing to the International Monetary Fund.

The attitude of the hard-pressed farmers is not nearly so predictable any more; their voting patterns might be upset this time by the devastating drop in incomes.

Nevertheless, Mr Haughey has got something the others do not have—personal magnetism. Everybody, even his closest supporters, think of him as a bit of a devil and that has far more attraction than the mundane efficiency of his rival in Fine Gael and the Labour Party.

Many senior politicians at Westminster were worried when Mr Haughey became Prime Minister in December

1979. His reputation was that of a hard-liner, an uncompromising republican. The reality has been different, however, and he is obviously a man the British can work with.

His deliberate silence during the worst moments of the Maze hunger strike crisis before Christmas was for the benefit of the British. Mrs Thatcher gave him the joint communiqué with all its innuendoes and he gave her his silence.

The two leaders meet next at Downing Street, probably in June or July, and will devote the entire meeting to considering the result of the joint studies. There are some issues on which there will be all-round delight if there are new agreements—such as restoration of the cross-border electricity link, which is out of use because of IRA bombs. The Republic wants to 'buy' much-needed electricity from the North, which has surplus generating capacity.

Border security is not a source of conflict. The British are satisfied that, especially considering the political difficulties it can cause, the Irish Government is doing all it conceivably can. Certainly, anybody who has travelled in the border areas in the past year will notice a much greater presence by the Irish police and army.

The big question is what happens when the studies come to the central political issue. My guess is that it will not present a problem. Both sides are determined to con-



Mrs Thatcher and Mr Charles Haughey meet at Dublin Castle for talks.

Christopher Thomas

Business inexperience the curse of the little man

Ireland's decision to join the European Monetary System about two years ago continues to provoke controversy in the Republic. Although there had long been a simmering dislike, on nationalistic grounds, of the one-for-one link between the Irish pound and sterling, the decision remains a sore point with the opponents of the link, particularly in view of the huge gap in value that the two currencies have experienced.

From a political viewpoint, the decision to join the EMS reflected a desire by Ireland to participate in the initiative by the Community to overcome the floating exchange rate systems of the early 1970s and to proceed to the ultimate objective of monetary union. It was also recognized that high inflation rates in Ireland were linked with inflationary conditions in the United Kingdom through the exchange rate. Essentially, the Irish level of inflation was determined by the British level of inflation.

The proponents of the link felt that linking the Irish pound to a strong cur-

rency such as the Deutsche mark would result in lower inflation (at the time, British inflation had averaged 14 per cent over a seven-year period, compared with 5 per cent in Germany).

Moreover, the reliance of Irish trade on the market in Britain had fallen considerably during the 1970s. At the beginning of the decade two thirds of Irish exports went to the United Kingdom market but at the end of 1978 the figure had fallen to just under a half. Meanwhile, exports to other EEC countries had risen to more than 30 per cent of total exports.

On the surface, the extraordinary differences in exchange rates experienced by the Irish pound and sterling might indicate a weak punt. In truth, what it really reflects is an over-strong pound, and the value of the Irish pound against other European currencies has held on reasonably well.

The fall in the punt against sterling should, according to economic theory, be opening up new opportunities for Irish exporters in the largest single overseas market—Britain.

That is the view of the state and of the banks but in reality the Irish exporter has not been finding it easy to seize the opportunity to the maximum.

When theory is translated into practice, one finds that many small firms in Ireland that are not accustomed to dealing with new and bewildering foreign exchange transactions can lose out. Inexperience is the curse of the Irish little man.

While the banks and the Government might cajole Irish exporters to take advantage of the rate in the currency, they might also try to remember just how depressed the United Kingdom market has become—even a 20 per cent gap has failed to compensate fully.

Also, many Irish exports are produced from raw materials that are imported from Britain—so you gain on the swings, lose on the roundabouts. And there is the agonizing problem of those exporters who have to invoice in Irish pounds because of contractual obligations. Imagine the wrath of a man who signed when the

punt was worth 90p and sold when it was standing at 78p.

But most exporters have begun to quote in sterling. And in fairness, the Irish Export Board reports that exporters are now taking much more advantage of the rise in sterling. Even so, there are few who would not prefer sterling and the Irish pound to be more equally balanced—the big gap may help exports to the United Kingdom, but elsewhere in the world it creates many difficulties. The general view is that the sooner there is parity, the better.

Ireland's trade figures published at the end of January showed disappointing trends, and it is widely expected that there is worse to come. The trade balance with the rest of the world, having improved for most of 1980, appears to be deteriorating.

The 1980 figures were partly improved because of the large numbers of hard-pressed farmers who sold off large parts of their stock (which, consequently, has resulted in a big shortage of cattle in the country, and it is likely to take two years to get stocks back to normal).

Also in 1980 Ireland managed to cut the trade deficit by sharp reductions in the volume of imports, which resulted in reduced investment spending, tighter energy conservation and reduced consumer imports such as cars.

But for all the efforts, the Irish pound only slightly rose from £1.317m (Irish) in 1979 to £1.291m in 1980. No rapid progress is in store for this year as there will be an inevitable fall in agricultural exports, because of the heavy destocking in agriculture in 1980.

Dr Carrer FitzGerald, leader of Fine Gael, has said more than once that the prospect of an appeal to the International Monetary Fund cannot be ruled out, because of Ireland's enormous overseas debts, although he admits such a move is far from imminent. But he thinks it could happen in a couple of years.

That assumption does not take into account the growing possibility that consumer prices will be discovered off Ireland's coast. The portents are encouraging. Exactly what would happen if there

were discoveries that exceeded Ireland's needs appears not to have been clarified in Dublin, but the feeling is that it would choose to become a net exporter.

Mr George Colley, Minister for Energy, estimates that the bill for imported energy will rise to about £1,000m in 1981. Per head of population, it is the highest bill in the European Community.

Intensive research is being conducted into biomass, which entails the planting of fast-growing timber that takes only four to five years to mature. Ireland has plenty of desolate boglands that would make an ideal setting. It is just one of the options to try to reduce Ireland's extreme vulnerability to another oil shock.

Between three quarters and four fifths of Ireland's energy needs are imported. Oil is the great goal that is obsessing the nation. Without its discovery, in spite of all the rosy talk, the prospect of a significant rise in the living standards of the Irish people in the foreseeable future are remote indeed.

C.T.

Black and white supplement.



REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Farm incomes show sharp drop

The price paid for a woman slave in ancient Ireland was three milk cows, which proves either that milk cows were held in high esteem, or that women slaves were held in low esteem. Either way, it proves that cows formed a central part of Irish society, and to that extent nothing has changed. The Irish dairy industry is of central importance to the economy, directly employing 73,000 people and able to brag that it is responsible for about 15 per cent of Ireland's total exports.

So what is good for milk is good for Ireland and it must be regarded as serious indeed when milk production takes a drop. The overriding agricultural story in Ireland last year was the drop, compared with 1979, of 2.5 per cent in the amount of milk the cooperatives received for turning into butter, cheese and other dairy products.

The enormity of that simple statistic is best illustrated by recalling the huge expansion of the dairy industry after Ireland acceded to the European Community. Almost every year farmers were gleefully reporting that milk production was striding ahead by an average of 9 per cent each year.

But it fell to 2.3 per cent in 1979. Then came the minus sign for the first time since 1974.

Dairy farmers rightly regard themselves as the elite of Irish agriculture. In addition to servicing about 24 advanced cooperative processing factories they spend large amounts of money.

In order to maintain their delicate females to high standards, dairy farmers invest huge sums in machinery to make feed, spread a lot of fertilizer to grow the feed, build enormous sheds to keep the cattle warm in the winter, buy antibiotics and employ veterinary surgeons, and buy lots of meat to improve milk yields. The all-round contribution to the Irish economy, therefore, is great indeed.

So when the dairy industry starts to suffer, everybody in the industry is inclined to lose confidence. Two big mistakes in the farm machinery business, Saviles of Santry (Dublin) and Pearse of



Ploughing a straight furrow in the Irish national championships.

Wexford, closed last year and many others laid off large numbers of employees.

Farm building firms had one of their worst years in 1980. Fertilizer usage fell 12 per cent over the previous year, and the four-year boom enjoyed by the feed companies came to an abrupt halt. It is not just the dairy farmers, therefore, who have suffered, although their heavy level of investment and rapid growth have made them more vulnerable to high interest rates and the

general air of economic gloom. Cruelly, the more go-ahead and progressive farmers are it is they who have incurred the greatest investment. That is why many farmers were forced last year to sell off an unduly large proportion of their stock—simply to try to meet their commitments.

The effect was to give the Irish economy a fillip because of unusually heavy agricultural exports, but the short-term gain will be paid for this year. Quite simply, Ireland is short of cattle, and it will take two years to get stocks back to normal.

Tens of thousands of farmers and their workers have

marched with banners to demand help from the Government. After a real income drop of almost 50 per cent last year over the previous two years, most farmers are at their wits end. There is no real prospect of an improvement through EEC price rises this year, unless there is a surprise devaluation of the "green pound".

The answer, then, is productivity. The early, heady days of EEC membership meant that Irish farmers hardly had to bother themselves about high productivity, because prices kept rising without even being asked for. The present squeeze has changed all that, and productivity has become almost a religion to the farmers.

Significantly, Irish farmers began last year to criticize the Common Agricultural Policy, which previously would have been seen as heresy. Obviously some critical changes need to be made to the system, and most people expect them to be made this year. Equally obviously, the Irish farmers' love affair with the EEC is over.

Nobody can see when the crisis will end. Certainly nobody predicted that, in suffering from it, Ireland had become used to eight-year cycles in agricultural setbacks—1953, 1966 and 1974. This one came two years early and at a particularly critical time, for there will almost certainly be a general election this year and farmers can make or break governments in Ireland.

Farmers defected from Fine Gael in 1977 because of the imposition of income tax and the wealth tax. They continue to fear another Fine Gael/Labour coalition, and are not convinced that Dr. Garret FitzGerald, Fine Gael's leader, is sympathetic to their plight.

Under Fianna Fail they have suffered a sharp drop in incomes, and so it is logical to suppose that Fianna Fail will lose some farmers' votes. Rarely has there been so little certainty about the collective political voting intentions of Ireland's farmers as close to an election.

Clearly, the hard-pressed Irish agricultural industry this year may have rather more to say about the political scene than many had supposed.

Christopher Thomas

Investment earns a high return

A book selling well in America entitled *The Expatriate Investor* sums up Ireland as an investment location as a land of "holy war, high taxes and cheap land". It goes on to claim that Ireland's three main political parties are socialist, but observes that, at least they know which side their bread is buttered on.

That is not quite the image Ireland's Industrial Development Authority is attempting to promote in a costly advertising campaign in the financial publications of the United States and the rest of the industrial world. The IDA advertisements proclaim that Ireland is the land "where private enterprise is public policy", where there is a stable business and political climate, and where manufacturing industry can expect to earn the highest rate of return on investment not just in Europe, but in the world.

The irony of Ireland's industrial accolade is that there is some truth in both points of view. The IDA's contention that Ireland is the world's most profitable manufacturing location is based on an annual survey of American overseas investment by the United States Department of Commerce. It shows that American manufacturing firms earned an average annual rate of return in Ireland of 23.4 per cent in the five years to 1979 compared with 13.7 per cent for all countries, 15.5 per cent for the EEC nine, and 12.1 per cent for the United Kingdom.

This prospect of a full return in little more than three years has been the key to Ireland's remarkable industrial performance over the past decade. The Department of Commerce survey also shows that the 600 American companies located in Ireland reinvested three quarters of their largely tax-free profits, and that investment by United States companies grew at a faster rate in Ireland (32 per cent) during the five years than anywhere else.

The overseas investment injection has shown up in an annual growth rate of 7 per cent to 8 per cent in industrial output since the mid-1970s, a surge in exports, and improved industrial productivity. However, this improving productivity has thwarted the



A New York-based company's £5m factory in Waterford: manufactures soft contact lenses.

IDA's efforts to raise industrial employment in line with the growth of Ireland's labour force. Between 1976 and 1979 industrial employment rose by only 10 per cent (an extra 21,000 jobs) compared with a growth in output of 37 per cent.

In 1980, because of recession both in Ireland and in Europe, there was a fall in employment. Despite a record year for the IDA which resulted in investment approvals for 1,850 projects involving a fixed asset investment of £580m and a job potential of 35,000, the job getters have been thwarted by a recurrence of heavy job losses in traditional manufacturing enterprises caused by the recession, and by the continuous growth in the labour force. Ireland's population growth rate, at 1.5 per cent a year, is matched in Europe only by Poland's. At the end of January Ireland's jobless total had risen to 125,000, an increase of almost 40 per cent on a year earlier.

But despite Ireland's chronic unemployment industrialization has transformed the country's economy. The IDA promotes export profits great efforts were made by the Government and the IDA to preserve the bottom line rate of return of 29 per cent.

The EEC's complaint was that the incentive was an indirect subsidy to exports and thus could be construed as a protective trade measure. The result was a new scheme which took effect on January 1, 1981, which levies a corporate tax rate of only 10 per cent on all

profits. Existing companies can continue to avail themselves of the total tax exemption on exports until 1990, while incoming companies are assured of the 10 per cent tax rate until the year 2000. The IDA is happy with the outcome for companies can reduce the new rate by as much as half through depreciation allowances. It has the added attraction, in the words of one of the IDA's tax experts, Mr. James Deery, of being "simpler, more certain and more straightforward than other schemes in the EEC".

Although it is an exaggeration to claim that Ireland's manufacturing sector is a haven of free enterprise surrounded by socialism it is nevertheless true that Irish governments lean towards Cambridge rather than Chicago in their other economic policies. Successive governments

have presided over a soaring Exchequer debt (in 1980 the borrowing requirement ran to 14.5 per cent of gnp and for 1981 there are few Irish economists who do not believe it will be higher). This debt has been incurred in part to improve the over-stretched, and at times exasperated, infrastructure of roads and telecommunications that industrialists have to contend with. It has also gone to satisfy the wage demands of the strike-prone public sector. And it has financed tax concessions for workers in the (almost strike-free) manufacturing sector, whose utility has been expressed in the streets against the PAYE tax system rather than in the factories against their employers.

Ken O'Brien
The Irish Times

Luring the British with value for money

You have to be clever to sell tourism. Once upon a time the policy of the Irish Tourist Board was to woo the British visitor by the assurance that the money was just the same as back at home. Now things have changed. Ireland joined the European Monetary System; Britain did not, so the British have to be persuaded with a different line of chat: "Your pound is worth much more in Ireland."

Since the notion that a pound is somehow worth much more than a pound is an appealing one, the new blandishment may be much more attractive than the old. Last year more than a million people went across the Irish Sea to Ireland from various parts of Britain. They spent a great deal of money—£120m is the official figure. They stayed in a great variety of accommodation, from castles to site caravans, and they moved around the country in an even greater variety, from horse-drawn caravans to motor launches, from their own cars—taken over on the ferries—to bus tours with stops at a different place every night.

A great many of these visitors may have had Irish connections, relatives or even Irish birth, but a satisfying number were "pure British". In other words people with no emotional ties to get them to take their holidays in Ireland.

The whole complicated tale of Irish tourism is probably already well known. After the Second World War, people came from Britain to Ireland in their thousands—because there was fresh country air, and most of all, there was food. They came worn-out and peckish from the rationing, the queues and the scarcities; they left bloated and gorged. And in those days the Irish had not learnt how to charge, so a cosy relationship grew up.

The British were the bread and butter market of Irish tourism for 20 years. I remember them well at both ends of the economic scales. There were the wealthy with their big purring cars and their dogs and their fishing rods; they stayed in the south-west usually. They were as regular as swallows and as welcome. Then there were the rather impoverished tourists, working men and their wives, usually middle-aged, who were able to afford a holiday abroad only after the children had grown up and started to earn...

but they were not able to go very far abroad, even then. They came to resorts outside Dublin on package tours, and they were the hotelier's dream. Excited and pleased by what they considered the quaint charm of Irish ways, enthusiastic to see anything that was offered, delighted to be met with open-mindedness rather than English reserve, they looked set to be the main-

stay of the Irish economy for ever.

But in the late 1950s the Troubles began and the number of British tourists declined. Such research as was done on a subject as elusive as attitudes towards nationality indicates that the British stayed away because they feared they would be unwelcome rather than because they feared they would be treated as "Yanks". Whatever the reasons, people stopped coming to a place they had liked before and those who had expected them were disappointed—they were seeing their living disappear. The Irish had built wings on to their hotels, modernized their guest houses, installed swimming pools, procured horses for pony trekking... and now the customers were not going to come any more. It has often been said that the fall-off was the best thing that ever happened to the Irish tourist trade, since it meant that hoteliers and other caterers could no longer take it for granted that there was a captive market just across a narrow sea channel. Now they had to look elsewhere, and even more important they had to look inward and examine what is called "the product".

What that product has to offer is potentially magnificent in an island with mountains and lakes and the longest and most beautiful river in that part of the world. Atlantic waves, fishing, golf, roads with only sparse traffic. But there are problems: one of them is that as the place is an island getting there, by air or sea, tends to be costly.

The carriers have had to get together with other interests to offer acceptable package tours nowadays. Gone are the times when the airline or the car ferries could charge what they liked and expect visitors to grin and bear it. Now there are very competitive packages. Aer Lingus provides a weekend in Dublin at a good hotel for £62, fare included, or a week rambling around the country, with a car for occasional short trips, from £73. That is a great improvement on having to pay the scheduled fare and make one's own arrangements.

British Rail has a package offering motorists a week in an Irish farmhouse from £79 a person, car ferry fare included, for parties of four or from £39 for two people. For as little as £23 a person B and I, which sails from Liverpool or Pembroke, will arrange a week's holiday in a well-kept, comfortable thatched cottage.

These examples indicate how Ireland has had to adapt its tourist trade to the needs of the market. The continent of Europe helped Ireland to improve its product greatly in other ways than just merely providing an alternative to British trade during the period that

this fell away. When determined marketing attempts were made to attract the French, German, Dutch and Italians, a long, slow look was taken at Irish food. We were quite satisfied with it the way it was, but the French in particular did a lot of nose-wrinkling and wondered why their hosts prepared all that beautiful fish and all those good vegetables, for example, in such an unexciting way.

The country has not been invented that can unreservedly please the French at table, but at least the Irish have now stopped displeasing them to the point of ranting. Many small and simple restaurants have started up all over the country preparing food from the locality in the old manner, and it is to the good of everyone. The mistakes of the fast food era are being rectified slowly. Nowadays Irish tourism realizes that it cannot charge very high prices and expect people to come back a second time.

Maevie Binchy
columnist,
The Irish Times

Ireland's International Bank

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Céad Míle Fáilte: Six translations for industrialists.



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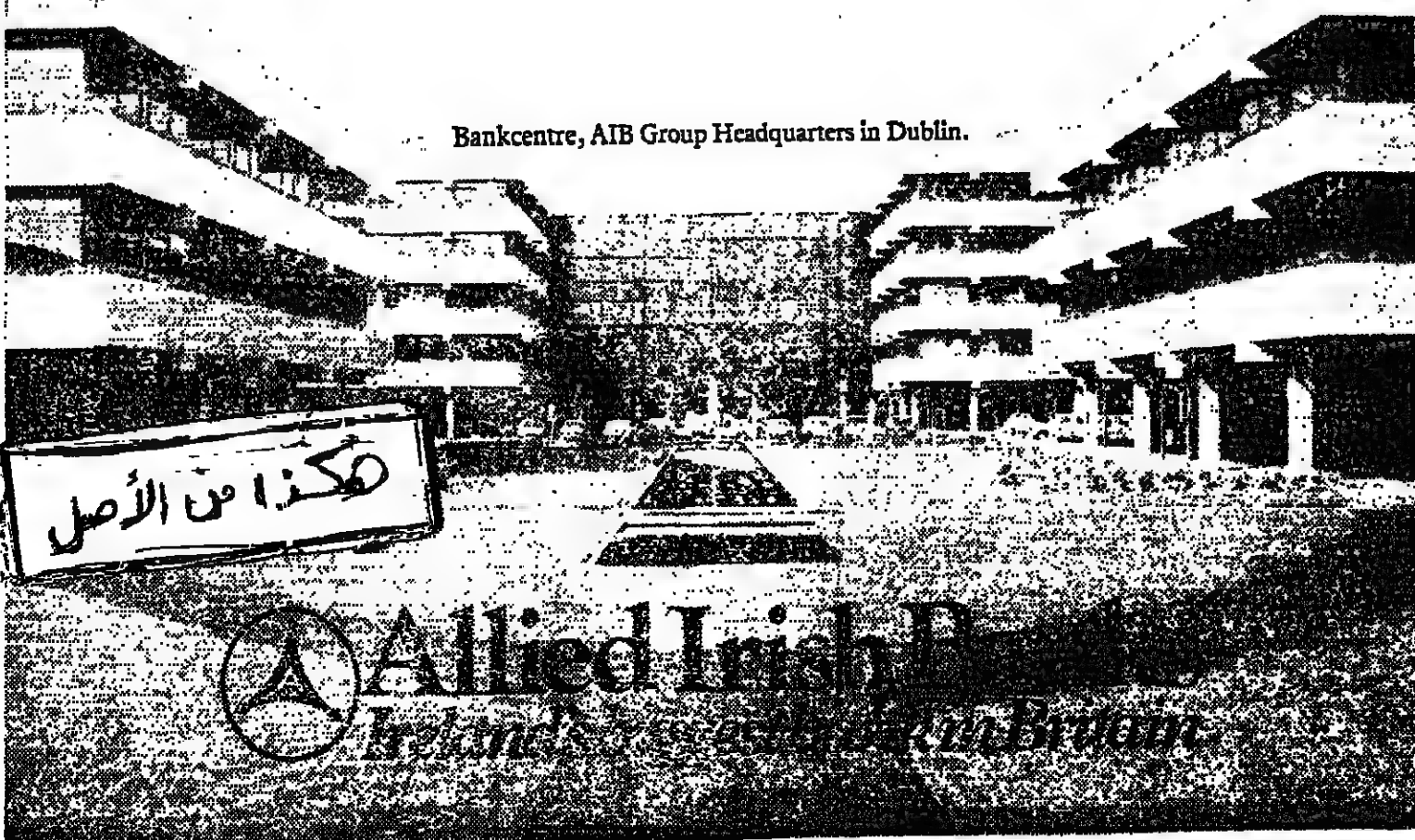
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Udarás na Gaeltachta



Population increase may be most significant social statistic



The 1970s was a period of such rapid economic and social change in Ireland that we are no longer the country we think we are. As a result, many of our laws, institutions and attitudes have become seriously outdated. The traditional strands of our political culture reflected the ethos of a largely rural society with a strong sense of nationalism together with the predominant influence of the Catholic Church on moral and social values.

The pattern of Irish society was already changing in the 1960s, with increased urbanization and industrialization, a decline in the numbers employed in agriculture, improved access to education and training and the influence of television and modern telecommunications. However, the pace of economic and social change accelerated significantly in the 1970s.

Side by side with this economic growth came significant demographic changes. The familiar pattern of emigration slowed in the late 1960s and was transformed to one of net immigration during several years in the 1970s. Although there is evidence that fertility in marriage was dropping (despite the legal ban on contraceptives), this did not produce a net decline in the birth rate because the total number getting married was rising.

The resulting population increase is possibly the most significant social statistic in modern Ireland: it was estimated that the figure exceeded the three million mark in 1972 for the first time in almost 50 years. The present population (April 1980) is 3,426,000 of which approximately 49 per cent is under the age of 25 and 40 per cent is under the age of 15.

Ireland joined the EEC with high expectations, after an overwhelming vote in favour of membership in May, 1972 (83.1 per cent in favour, 16.9 per cent against), and encouraged by the commitment of the Paris Summit in October, 1972 to put into effect regional and social programmes which would transform it from a "common market" to a "European community".

This social dimension was given a particular focus for Ireland when the first Irish member of the Commission, Dr Patrick Hillery, was allocated what was then the underdeveloped brief of social affairs. However, although the establishment of the European social fund provided a considerable boost to development of training in Ireland there was early disappointment at the lack of political will to achieve balanced regional development.

The most striking social impact was in the area of equality between the sexes. Ireland found itself moving at a European rather than an Irish pace in putting into effect EEC equality directives. Not only did Ireland lack a strong preexisting ideology of equality, but the 1937 Constitution itself reflected traditional attitudes towards the role of women

with provisions such as: "In particular, the state recognizes that by her life within the home, woman gives to the state a support without which the common good cannot be achieved."

"The state shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home."

This was followed immediately by the prohibition of any divorce legislation: "No law shall be enacted providing for the grant of a dissolution of marriage."

A direct clash occurred in December 1975 on the issue of putting into effect the EEC directive on equal pay within the time-scale required by Europe. The Irish Government introduced a Bill in Parliament seeking to postpone full operation of the Irish legislation until December 31, 1977, and applied to the EEC Commission to detract from the requirements of the directive. This provoked a storm of protest from the trade union movement and women's organizations, but the effective pressure was exercised in Brussels, when the EEC Commission rejected the Irish application and refused to permit any postponement.

Although the EEC equality measures have had a considerable impact in promoting Irish domestic legislation and machinery for pursuing equal opportunities, the main beneficiaries in Ireland—as elsewhere in the EEC—have been white-collar workers and professional women. The EEC measures have had little impact on the position of the vast majority of women workers who have low-paid and often part-time jobs, clustered at the bottom of the economic scale and classified still as "women only".

For this reason, the impact of EEC legislation on the broader social situation and perceptions of Irish women had been very limited until recently. However, during the past few weeks a heated controversy has arisen as a result of the recent report and resolution of the European Parliament adopted on February 11, 1981, on the position of women in the European Community.

It is the section of this report on health care, with its reference to abortion legislation, which has aroused a hostile response and rested in public statements by prominent politicians and by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin that if any attempt were made to compel Ireland as a condition of membership to legalize abortion, the country should withdraw forthwith from the EEC. So

strong has been the reaction on this issue that the many other valuable proposals in the report have been almost ignored by Irish politicians and the media.

Given that a majority of politicians of all parties in the Republic aspire to the political goal of a united Ireland, which they want to see achieved by peaceful means, it might be thought that this political aspiration would help to stimulate changes in the Constitution and laws of the Republic. Logically it would seem to create pressure to make the Republic a more pluralistic and acceptable society to those not belonging to the majority religion, whether they form part of the existing minority in the Republic or are in the majority in Northern Ireland whom it is sought to attract into some form of political co-operation.

However, far from stimulating social change in this area in the Republic, the political reality is that the Northern Ireland problem has created an artificial barrier to any such change because the present Taoiseach, Mr. Haughey, appears to view any liberalization of the Constitution or laws of the Republic as bargaining counters in some future negotiations on Irish unity.

This can be illustrated clearly in the following extracts from the parliamentary record during 1980. On May 29 1980 Mr. Haughey made a formal statement to the Dail on his meeting with Mrs. Thatcher in London on May 21, during which he stated: "I am prepared at any time to enter into discussion with representatives of any tradition in these islands. I say now clearly, that the people who regard their tradition as being far removed from ours would be surprised at the length to which we would be prepared to go in such discussions to accommodate them, to give guarantees and underpinnings to protect and safeguard their interests and traditions."

However, only a few days later, when Dr. Noel Browne attempted to get a first reading for a Private Member's Bill to remove the divorce ban, it was opposed by the Minister for Justice as follows: "As the Deputy is aware, recently the Taoiseach said in this House that the Government had no plans at present to promote legislation to amend the Constitution to remove the prohibition on the grant of a dissolution of marriage. The Government recognizes and is deeply concerned about the hardship and suffering that arises for people whose marriages have broken down. However, to be in any way ambiguous about the possibility of divorce legislation would be misleading

to those among them who might wish to avail themselves of divorce facilities in that it would hold out prospects that are unlikely to materialize."

Again, at the end of October, 1980, an attempt by the Labour Party to establish an all-party committee to examine the constitutional prohibition and recommend the necessary change which would allow the introduction of divorce was also defeated.

This attitude of "no surrender" by the Irish Government on the divorce issue in 1980 contrasts with a unanimous recommendation in 1967 from an All-Party Committee on the Constitution that the prohibition of divorce should be changed. "Because among other reasons... The prohibition is a source of embarrassment to those seeking to bring about better relations between North and South since the majority of the Northern population have divorce rights under the law applicable to that area" (Report of the Committee on the Constitution, December 1967). What has occurred in the intervening 13 years to change the unanimous recommendation of that All-Party Committee (which was chaired by the present Taoiseach, Mr. George Colley) into such an implacable "no" by the present Government led by Mr. Haughey?

Ireland has the healthy pressure of the youngest and fastest growing population in the European Community, together with the stimulus of rapid economic and social development. What is needed now is more institutional flexibility, and a clearer commitment to social and legislative reform.

We must preserve our existing strengths—including the values of warmth, humour and strong family bonds—while removing the unnecessary constraints and barriers to individual and community development. Above all, perhaps, we must try to know and understand the country we have become, and not try to live in the safer pastures of former days.

Mary Robinson
senior counsel, senator and lecturer in European Community law, Trinity College, Dublin

Extraordinary success in EEC diplomacy

The endless ironies of Irish history may seem to the British—and therefore innocent—observer to have thrown out a new and additionally irritating dimension in the extraordinary success of its EEC diplomacy. The reality of this success is evident to those who have eyes to see (never a widespread ailment where British consciousness of Europe is concerned).

The opportunity, indeed the hedonism, of so much modern Irish political life could offer one explanation: having gorged itself on inconsistent nationalist ideology for so long, Ireland may be much less impeded by chauvinism than its EEC rivals. The Irish have long known how to use nationalism as a means of hard political profit, not as a personal psychological quick standing in the way of internationalism.

Irish nationalist grievances are notorious; but if little is made of them, it is because the foreign observer Ireland trusts its alleged uniqueness on its visitors, uniqueness being a good tourist commodity.

Even so, seasoned journalists, broadcaster and historian as Robert Kee can be misled (and misleading) here in his remarkable books and telecasts. Irish nationalism presented itself in unique colours, underlining the point by the name Sinn Féin (We Ourselves). The fact that the name of the statesman most closely and extensively associated with Irish nationalist leadership in the twentieth century was Spanish increased an emphasis on the Irishness of his movements and aims.

Yet Irish nationalism is not all that Irish. Apart from its many British and American antecedents, much of it is deeply influenced by Europe. It is arguable that if the English had made any serious or constructive attempt to convert Ireland to Protestantism in the late sixteenth century, instead of giving priorities to national activity, international diplomacy, economic capacity and so on, they might have succeeded, given the relative indifference of the populace to religious dictates. Irish Catholicism had become a reinvigorated and embattled Catholicism of the Counter-Reformation which changed that and identified Irish national resistance with Catholic resurgence, less through the Papal crusade of James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald against Elizabeth, or the mission of Archbishop Rinuccini to the Catholics during Charles's civil war, than through the network of Irish missionaries from the Continent.

Irish Catholicism had been prickly and hostile to outside influences in times past. The Celtic church controversy was only one of a number of clashes with Rome, another manifestation of which, some 500 years later, was the Papal urging of a Norman invasion. This did not mean that the Irish were unaware of Europe in the first millennium AD (a highly meretricious one for the Irish); but Ireland believed that the balance of missionary trade should be drastically tilted in favour of exports.

Post-Roman Europe was to be Ribernized. Europe struck back ultimately, via Henry II, but it was only when the Anglo-Papal partnership for modernization of Ireland dissolved that European Catholicism really got its chance. The eighteenth century, when a largely proscribed Catholicism forced Catholics to go to Europe for clerical education, vastly deepened the Europeanization of Irish Catholic culture.

Catholic emancipation may have seemed to be likely to end this process, but in one important consideration it deepened it. The third quarter of the nineteenth century was dominated in Ireland by the personality of Archbishop (later Cardinal) Paul Cullen who resisted both the English orientation of his immediate predecessors Croly and Murray and the Irish cultural emphasis of his opposite number, MacHale of Tuam.

Cullen had been Rector of the Irish College in Rome during Meville's Roman Republic of 1848, had kept his house immune by flying the United States flag on it, and had returned to his native Ireland a trusted emissary of Pío Nono, a bitter and intransigent opponent of radicalism, nationalism, republicanism and secularism, and a genius in organization which built up an urbanizing Irish Catholicism on firmly status-conscious devotional overtones.

Ironically, his enemies in the struggle of nationalists and clergy for mass Irish leadership were often looking to Italy as well. Some, notably the Fenians, were directly influenced from their origin by Italian republicanism, conspiracy networks and rhetoric; the father of Fenianism, James Stephens, owed much specifically to Manin of the Venetian Republic.

The Fenian tradition also drew on its predecessor movement, Young Ireland, which came into being in 1848 and owed much to the German romantics via Carlyle, while the famous United Irishmen of the 1790s, the pattern of modern Irish violent insurrection, had been directly an outgrowth of the French Revolution and were most appropriately symbolized by the suicide in captivity of their leader, Theobald Wolfe Tone, asserting with justice but without success his rights as an officer of the French army.

The entire tradition of violence in Ireland is a very alien one in its most specific assertion; Gaelic poetry never glorified war to the extent that romantic Anglo-Irish poetry was to do. Much would be owed to the influence of British—and American—militaristic cults, but France, Germany and Italy played critical parts in the initial instance. It seems highly appropriate that the rebellious Ulster Protestants under Carson's leadership should have obtained their arms from Germany in 1914, no less than that the proclamation of the Republic in the nationalist rising two years later should have so charmingly alluded to the kaisers of Germany and Austria and their subjects as "gallant allies in Europe".

Well might Sherlock Holmes ascribe the entire Irish crisis to the Germans in *His Last Bow* (and, it being still 1914, the most conspicuous agents operating in Germany's interests were at that stage still the Unionists).

Yet the country which had most effect on Ireland in opening it up to European influences was necessarily England. The omnipresence of English metropolitan priorities and self-absorption drove the Irish intellectuals, Protestant and Catholic, into a search for European influences with which to assert their own self-respect against the complacent core of their cultural world. So Shaw beat London over the head with *Ibsen of Norway*, and Wilde wove a web around his hosts that stretched from Greece to Paris, and Yeats took them sailing from Byzantium to Japan and Joyce turned the uttermost form of local obsession into the most secular kind of universality.

Owen Dudley Edwards
reader in history
Edinburgh University

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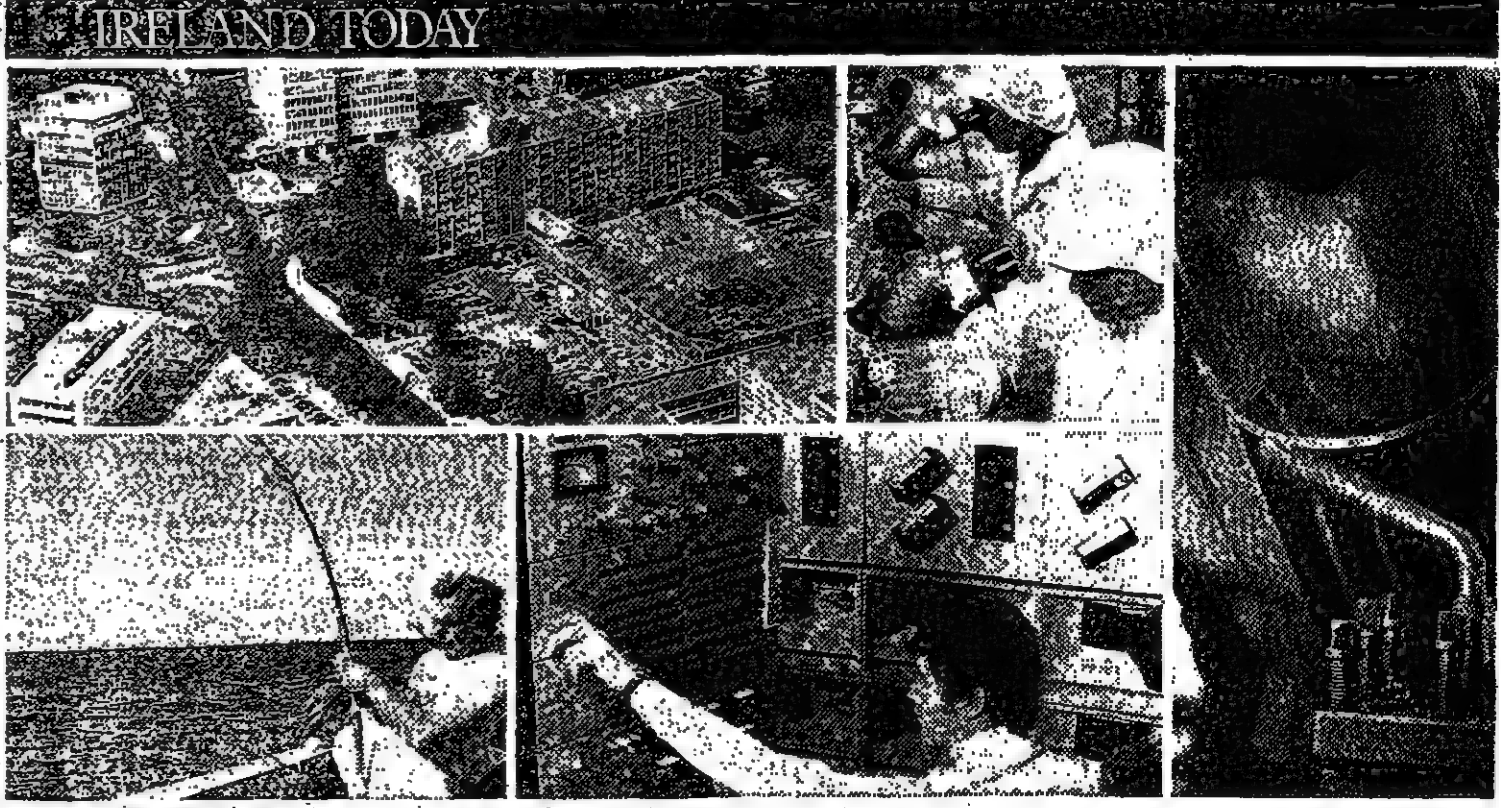
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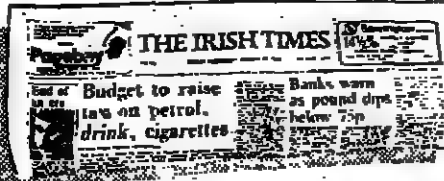
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With Downing Street in winter need it is left to Buckingham marriages are out of fashion in English society. The number

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Rates and taxes

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STEEL?

that some future government will introduce an annual property tax, probably calling it something other than rates, and then we shall have two taxes instead of one.

Yours faithfully,
J. A. CHARMAN,
53 The Avenue,
Gravesend,
Kent.
February 20.

From Mr J. M. Dennes
Sir, If the Government are said

Civil servants' demands

grounds for racial tension by adopting radical housing, employment, and educational programmes; but in

reasonable cause, then I am wholly
in favour of such a measure since
it must lessen the appalling family
tragedies that result from each and
every road accident.
Yours faithfully,
JACKIE STEWART.
24 Route de Divonne,
1260 Nyon,
Vaud, Switzerland.
February 21

Time for Cabinet second thoughts

proceeds from a private treaty sale to a public institution in this country are by statute tax-free.

His reputation seems to have gotten round to the passengers. One who survived, as she watched deck hands loading luggage at Southampton, asked one of them: "Is this ship really non-sinkable?" To which she received a reply that echoes down the years: "Yes, lady. God Himself could not sink this ship." Again, as the passengers, alerted by the crew, began turning out of their

cond thoughts

important pictures in this country (at a cost to them of more than £450,000), and praise is also due to

biology had gone beyond us by the time the Titanic was launched in 1911. These opinions (and other opinions on other matters) assumed a pretty fragile appearance after that fateful night in 1912.

Sincerely,
MICHAEL HOLLIS,
53 Romsey Road,
Winchester.
February 15,

Repairs at Palace of Westminster

From Professor J. Coveney
Sir, David Wood's article (February

Gloucestershire.
February 16.

such right up until the early 1940s. More likely, the secondary and public schoolboys of that era revived it, unwittingly, by lifting it from their favourite reading-matter. Yours faithfully,
JACK ADRIAN,
22 Sumatra Road,
West Hampstead, NW6.
February 23.

The engagement of the Prince of Wales to Lady Diana Spencer

One of the trials and vexations of being a Prince of Wales is the obsessive interest that complete strangers take in his private life. This is not simple prurience or vulgar star-worship, though a lot of it is. It springs from the religious roots of the monarchy as tribal totem and symbol of continuity. The monarch is not a crowned president. She is anointed. She represents a supernatural element in the nation. It may be tough luck, as the previous Prince of Wales found, but more than anybody else in the nation the Prince has a duty to marry the right person and produce heirs to keep the line going. It may be superstitious. But whom he marries is an important matter for the nation, as well as a matter of excitement for the gossip columns.

The Prince is aware of the duty and the importance. One locus classicus for his views on his marriage was in a television interview with Brian Connolly in 1969. "You have got to choose somebody very carefully who could fulfil this particular role because people like you, perhaps, would expect quite a lot from somebody like that; and it has got to be somebody pretty special."

The other locus classicus came five years later when Kenneth Harris suggested that it was unlikely that he would marry someone who was neither of royal lineage nor an aristocrat. "There's no essential reason why I shouldn't. I'd be perfectly free to. What would make it unlikely would be accidental, not essential. Whatever your place in life, when you marry you're forming a partnership which you hope will last, say, 50 years—certainly hope so, because, as I told you, I've been brought up in a close-knit happy family, and family life means more to me than anything else. So I'd want to marry someone who had interests which I understood and could share."

Then look at it from the woman's point of view. A woman not only marries a man; she marries into a way of life in which she's got a contribution to make. She's got to have some knowledge of it, some sense of it, or she won't have a clue about whether she's going to like it. And if she didn't have a clue it would be risky for her, wouldn't it? If I'm deciding on whom I want to live with for 50 years—well, that's the last decision in which I would want my head to be ruled entirely by my heart. It's nothing to do with class; it's to do with compatibility. There are as many cases of marriages turning out unsatisfactorily because a man married 'above' himself as there are when he married 'below'. Marriage isn't an 'up' or 'down' issue, anyway; it's a side-by-side one. Quite so.

The last time a Prince of Wales married was on March 10, 1863 at St George's, Windsor. Tennyson celebrated the event with courtly verses:

See-King's daughter from over the sea,
Alexandra!

Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,
But all of us Danes in our welcome to thee, Alexandra!

We look forward to the present Post Laureate's celebration, with pity and terror. Is it any longer possible for anybody other than E. Thibb to write serious ceremonial verses for such an occasion?

After the Prince has married, by the old-fashioned logic of the monarchy it will be possible to think again about his career. By definition the chief function of a Prince of Wales consists of waiting to succeed. It is important that he should not rust in strenuous idleness in the way that the Prince who became Edward VII was forced to by his mother's traditional and unconscious jealousy of her heir.

Prince Charles's preparation for his job has been magnificent: almost too conscientious. After surviving the old-fashioned rigours of Cheam and the new-fashioned heartiness of Gordonstoun, he blossomed into an interesting and amusing person at Timbertop and Cambridge. He is the first close member of the Royal Family to have taken a university degree; perhaps the first since George IV to have been capable of one. The RAF and the Navy were a success; he enjoyed them and was at the work. But he left too soon. His organization of the silver jubilee appeal was a triumph that confounded the cynics.

Since then his job has been what is officially described as "pursuing a programme of familiarization with various aspects of public life in Britain". The trouble is that a visit to some industry organized by the National Economic Development Office, a day behind the scenes at Downing Street, or an afternoon in the gallery of the House of Commons does not seem to sceptics exactly a proper job; more like the crash course in public life organized for a Miss World. Most of the Prince's contemporaries at Cambridge, in their 30s, have reached the stage in their careers where they have demanding and responsible work to do.

The Prince is always irritated when somebody suggests that he does not do a proper job. He certainly has a very full diary and very busy day. It is true that his course of familiarization with all aspects of public life is undertaken in addition to the heavy normal round of royal duties and repeated visits abroad. Switzerland, Zimbabwe, the Netherlands, India this year, in addition to frequent private visits; the burden of them sounds intolerable to less eager travellers. He does a great deal of work on his trusts, and charities, and estates. But that is the sort of work that retired major-generals were invented to perform.

One of the suggestions has been that he should be introduced to the executive side of the monarchy business by being made a governor-general. It is accepted (with a wry smile) that Commonwealth countries will not take a bachelor governor-general; they want the wife, children, entertainment, and image of ideal nuclear family life. The trouble with that suggestion is that the job in Canada is at present intensely exposed and political; and Edward Schreyer was sworn in to it only in January 1979. The Australians do not want a Pommy, and the job, after the passage between John Kerr and Gough Whitlam, is likely to become critically political. New Zealand perhaps? Or one of the new Commonwealth countries? As is natural in his position, the Prince really does believe that the Commonwealth exists and is valuable.

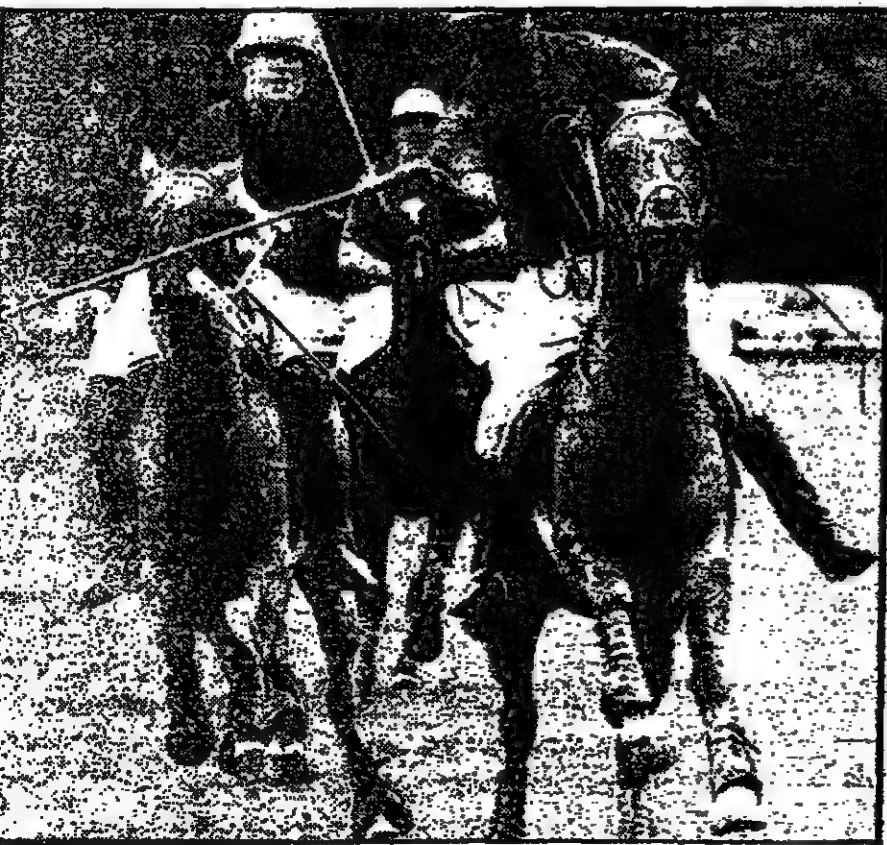
If a job in the Commonwealth gets the thumbs-down, why cannot he take a job in industry or the Civil Service? One can see that something in private industry would be invidious and possibly unfair to the competitors. It would be an unkind and unnatural punishment to send him to British Leyland. But there are plenty of responsible and unpolitical jobs that he could do well in: a nationalized industry or a department of state. Trade seems vulgar to some in the



'Perfect candidate' for a highly demanding job



Left: Charles, aged one, with the Queen, then Princess Elizabeth; Centre: the young Prince aged nine; Right: Charles takes part in a revue during his last year at Cambridge.



Playing polo, 1969; and right, as captain of HMS Bronington, 1976.

Palace. It never seemed so to George VI, who knew that Britain lives or dies by it. Another consequence of the Prince's marriage will be that he will have to find himself a place of his own in London. He has lived at home for long enough, subject to the restrictions of gerontocracy, hierarchy, and tradition that are part of a hereditary monarchy. He needs to get this right after the indecisive muddle that he made over Chevening.

Another vexation of being Prince of Wales is that journalists will write impertinent pieces on set occasions. We note with joy that the Prince's love of music and particularly the opera is genuinely deep. With his grandmother and his aunt he keeps the cultural flag flying for the Royal Family. We note with gloom that he has got a country house

in Gloucestershire to be near the hunting and the older Booby Henrys, who seem to the captious to be too numerous among his close friends. An unmarried Prince of Wales finds the company of older married men and women easier, because the marriage question does not arise. That difficulty now ends. If we're bound to niggle in order to display our virility, we might say that as a bachelor he has been in danger of becoming Action Man.

We are delighted that he has kept his anarchic sense of humour, but hope that it will soon progress beyond the Goons. He must not imitate his father in lecturing his audiences to work harder and do better; and he really must drop the regular jockey introduction to his speeches. "I can't think why you have asked me to speak, because I know nothing about silicon chips." (or, as it might be, "farming guinea fow"). If he really can't think why, somebody should tell him.

Impertinence apart, it is generally agreed that we are lucky to have such a promising, intelligent, and conscientious young man, who is likely, when put on, to prove most royally.

If one were writing a Tacitean account of his engagement, in which everything is arranged by court intrigue, one might observe mischievously that the Queen Mother's party (Livius?) had defeated the Mountbatten party (Aspripina?). It is a remarkable coincidence, even in this magic circle, that both Lady Diana Spencer's grandmothers and four of her great-aunts were or still are attendants in the Queen Mother's court.

Countess Spencer (1897-1972) was her Lady of the Bedchamber. Lady Sarah Fermoy, the other grandmother, had been a Woman of the Bedchamber since 1960. Lady Delia Peel (b 1889) was an Extra Woman of the Bedchamber. Her sister, originally Lady Lavinia Spencer, who died in 1955, was an Extra Lady-in-Waiting to the Queen Mother when she was her bridesmaid. Lady Katharine Seymour (b 1900) is an Extra Woman of the Bedchamber. And the Dowager Duchess of Abercorn, the fourth great aunt, is Mistress of the Robes to the Queen Mother, who is fenced around with Spencers. She will have as many Spencers around her at the wedding as the bride.

Philip Howard

Why, innocent, modest, retiring, demure and coy, the girl next door. . . These are just some of the labels which have stuck like confetti to Lady Diana Spencer during the intense speculation leading up to yesterday's announcement of her engagement to Prince Charles.

It was for some of these reasons that she has seemed to many people such an eminently suitable choice to become the first Princess of Wales since 1901 and the future Queen of England.

Although not immediately of royal blood, Lady Diana belongs to a family which has had close links with royalty for centuries and is distantly related.

She was born on the Sandringham estate in Norfolk and the family moved in 1975 to Althorp, Northamptonshire, when her father assumed the earldom. Despite the 'familiar' close proximity Lady Diana said she first recalls meeting Prince Charles in November, 1977.

Lady Diana is considered by friends to be the perfect candidate for what must be one of the most demanding of jobs, although one that has the attraction of immense prestige.

At the age of 19 she is young enough not to have been seriously involved with other men—something that is said to have been an important consideration to Prince Charles and his advisers—and mature enough to be discreet about her relationship with him without antagonising the press.

Her youth is in contrast to some of the older and more independent women whom Charles has previously accompanied, and the 19-year-old may well have provoked some serious doubts.

But it does have the advantage of making her more adaptable to the strict demands of royal protocol and the relentless exposure to the ever-inquisitive media demanding access to the royal couple's private life.

In addition to that she is pretty, poised and with a stylish sense of dress. Her teaching at a kindergarten in Pimlico in central London is said to have pleased the Queen, reflecting both professionalism and enjoyment of children.

The close family connections with the Royal Family have also given her experience in handling the pressures which accompanied her relationship with Prince Charles: her modesty and charm have prevented her falling into some of the traps which led to the rapid exodus of his less discreet girl friends.

To palace-watchers, the engagement is seen as something of a triumph for the Queen Mother.

The late Lady Annaly, a great-aunt of Lady Diana, was a close friend of the Queen Mother. It is well known that Charles is extremely fond of his grandmother and he may well have been influenced by this link.

Not that there is likely to have been any opposition to the engagement within Buckingham Palace. The Queen is apparently delighted with the choice and Prince Philip has been chivvying Charles for some time to make up his mind.

The ties between the two families can only have facilitated the decision. Lady Diana's father, the eighth Lord Spencer, has been within the royal circle for many years and was equerry to King George VI between 1936-53 and to the Queen for two years after her accession.

King George III and Queen Charlotte were godparents to one of the daughters of the second earl, who was First Lord of the Admiralty and Secretary of State. The third earl was Chancellor of the Exchequer and the fourth a rear-admiral and Lord Chamberlain. The fifth was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, First Lord of the Admiralty, Keeper of the Privy Seal and Groom of the Stole to the Prince Consort and to Edward VII when he was Prince of Wales. The sixth was Lord Chamberlain to Edward VII and George V. Lady Diana is the youngest daughter of Lord Spencer's four children by his first marriage to Frances, Lord Fermoy's sister. The union was dissolved in 1969.

Her stepmother, the former Lady Darrocmouth, the daughter of the romantic novelist Barbara Cartland, the marriage would therefore make Miss Cartland Prince Charles's step-grandmother-in-law.

The divorce of Lady Diana's parents, which in earlier and more rigid times might have proved an obstacle to the marriage, has hardly been mentioned. Her mother has remarried, to Mr Peter Shand Kydd. The children are still close to her.

Of Lady Diana and Prince Charles are distantly related. According to Mr David Williamson, senior contributing editor of Burke's Peerage, they are seventh cousins once removed, both being descended from King James I and having a common ancestor in the third earl of Devonshire.

Other genealogists have traced her family back to King Charles II, with various connections with the Dukedom of Abercorn, the Dukes of Richmond and the Lucan family.

They are also distantly related to the Spencer-Churchills, the Marlborough family.

Lord Spencer's friendship with the Royal Family has meant that the Queen is godmother to Lady Diana's brother, and her two sisters, Lady Sarah and Lady Jane, are goddaughters of the Queen Mother and the Duke of Kent. Lady Jane is married to Mr Robert Fellowes, one of the Queen's assistant private secretaries.

The sixteenth-century house at Althorp, with its thousands of acres of farmland, has been the family home for generations. It houses one of the finest private art collections in the country, including portraits by Reynolds, Gainsborough and Van Dyck. The earl felt seriously ill two years ago and, despite a formidable effort, has made only a partial recovery.

Speculation about a romance started last August when it was discovered that Lady Diana had spent a weekend at Balmoral.

She had often been seen with the Prince previously, but normally in the company of her elder sister, Lady Sarah, who is a close friend of Charles.

The speculation was fuelled by reports that two of Prince Charles's confidantes, Lady Teyron and Camilla Parker-Bowles, had given their approval to the romance.

Buckingham Palace, which has weathered many storms of publicity about the Prince's love life, refused to comment.

"So the announcement has put an end to a popular and long-running form of entertainment: predicting who and when Prince Charles would marry."

With the millions of words and rash predictions now forgotten, the focus of attention will presumably shift to when a future heir to the throne will arrive.

John Witherow

[illegible]



Soviet credit for pipeline reassessed by Germans

A consortium of more than 25 West German banks met in Frankfurt to reassess terms of a proposed 10,000 million Deutsche mark (about £500m) credit to finance a pipeline in the Soviet Union.

Some banks are growing increasingly nervous about the offer presented to a Soviet delegation at the end of January, after the steep rise in West German interest rates.

They have expressed reservations about refinancing a 10 year loan at a rate believed to be 9 1/2 per cent now that long term domestic bond yields have risen to 10 1/2 per cent.

Deutsche Bank, which is heading the consortium, said it doubted that the meeting would lead to a conclusion about the credit.

Polish economy talks
A Polish deputy premier and planning commission chief have begun talks with West German officials as the Communist country's creditors considered easing its debt burden.

The talks centred on Poland's economic situation, including plans by the European Economic Community to provide meat and other foodstuffs.

Hongkong exports
Despite strenuous efforts by the Trade Development Council and other business organizations, exports of Hongkong-made products to Japan last year fell 12 per cent from a year earlier to HK\$2,330m (£195m) after jumping 43 per cent in 1979. Last year's drop in exports helped to push the trade balance in Japan's favour to HK\$21,000m.

Australian car tariffs
Australia's car and components industries could be eliminated, with the loss of tens of thousands of jobs, if the government accepts proposals for the abolition of tariff protection after 1984 the industry leaders claim. Borg-Warner said it could not survive such a move and Nissan of Japan said a decision would affect its plans to invest \$890m in Australia.

Turkish visit to Bonn
Mr Turgut Ozal, the Turkish deputy prime minister, was unable to travel to Bonn yesterday, because of bad weather, but talks with Herr Hans Matthöfer, the West German finance minister, on a new Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development credit package for Turkey.

Indian economy
Indian gross national product is expected to grow 4.5 per cent in the fiscal year ending March 31 after a decline of 4.5 per cent in 1980, according to the Asian Wall Street Journal. The survey said that 1982 ought to see a further improvement in agricultural and industrial output.

Belgian recession
The Belgian economics ministry has said that the recession appears to be bottoming out and has predicted that the country's low inflation rate will be maintained in 1981. But it gave a warning that unemployment would surge to 490,000 this year.

German money supply
The West German broadly defined money supply (M3) grew at a seasonally adjusted projected annual 8.4 per cent in January, up from a 7.1 per cent projected growth rate in December and a 3.9 per cent rate in January, 1980.

Japan sued
A Hongkong investment group, Newpiss Hongkong, has sued the Japanese Government for restricting the purchase of shares of Katakura Industries, Japan's top silk spinner, officials said. The suit has been filed in the Tokyo district court.

Canada concern
Canada has told Mr Saburo Okita, Japan's special trade representative, that it is concerned about the imbalance in the domestic car market created by Japanese imports, Mr Mark Macguigan, external affairs minister, said.

EL compensation
Compensation terms have been agreed for the 2,000 workers made redundant at EL's plant at Senefelt, Belgium. It guaranteed them between 90 and 95 per cent of their salaries for the first year, plus a lump sum of £1,250.

Taiwan's US mission
Taiwan will send its sixth procurement mission to the United States next month to buy \$1,200m (about £530m) worth of goods, including coal and energy exploration equipment.

Denmark trade deficit
Denmark's balance of trade deficit, narrowed to 1,020m kroner (about £70m) in January from 1,370m kroner in December and 2,230m kroner in January last year.

MPs and directors put on pressure for retrospective legislation

Shipyards after more compensation

The Government is facing renewed pressure to increase substantially the level of compensation paid to the former owners of Britain's three principal shipbuilding yards. And yesterday, Vickers, Vosper and Yarrow intensified their campaign with the help of the Institute of Directors and an impressive array of Conservative backbenchers.

The three companies, whose assets were nationalized three and a half years ago as a result of the Labour Government's Aerospace and Shipbuilding Act, have so far received £25.3m but are demanding substantially more.

Over the past few months the pressure for the Government to introduce retrospective legislation to amend the compensation terms has built up, although attempts by Conservative backbenchers to force the Government's hand have so far failed. But Mr Geoffrey Rippon, Conservative MP for Hexham, gave a warning yesterday that "this issue is not going to be allowed to die away".

Mr Wether Goldsmith, director general of the Institute of Directors, said at a press conference in London: "Our concern is that a Conservative government is in danger of surrendering large and important hostages to fortune which will return to haunt it if another socialist government is elected."

The three shipbuilding companies are

in various stages of presenting their cases in the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Decisions on whether the cases go forward for hearing are expected to be announced over the next few months. Mr Rippon and other government backbenchers reaffirmed their intention to keep up continued pressure on the Government. At the end of last month Mr Rippon introduced a private members' Bill which was "talked out" but he maintained yesterday that whatever objection there might be to retrospective legislation, there was no constitutional obstacle.

Since then, an early day motion has been put down and has so far attracted 125 signatures, reflecting the bulk of Tory backbenchers, supported by some Liberal MPs. The Conservative backbenchers together with Liberal MPs are urging the Government to give a second reading to a Bill of Rights which has already been substantially debated in the House of Lords.

Attacking the Government for failing to amend the "confiscatory formula" nature of the terms of the original compensation, he said that he could find no example among the Government or its supporters of a serious attempt to challenge the unfair nature of the compensation so far offered and paid to the nationalized companies.

Mr Goldsmith said that the Government

had so far resisted pressure to introduce retrospective legislation to correct the basis of the compensation formula, and he added that such legislation was appropriate in the case of the three former owners of the yards.

But the institute and Conservative backbenchers see a dangerous precedent for a future government hostile to free enterprise in the Government's reluctance to move forward with retrospective legislation.

Mr Goldsmith said that the Labour Party's draft manifesto promised further nationalization and the restoration to public ownership of any public sector interests which had been sold off by the present government. The consequences for the entire private sector of the British economy if the Government failed to amend the shipbuilding compensation formula, would be "awful".

He added: "Unless it reverses its failure to act in the naval shipbuilders' case, it will have set a clear precedent for confiscatory seizures of the assets of companies, and which is worse—committed itself to fail to remedy the injustice if re-elected. Mr Goldsmith said that he had written to Sir Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Industry, inviting him to reopen this most disturbing case."

Peter Hill



An artist's impression of the shuttle system which will link Birmingham's new airport with its railway station and exhibition centre.

Britain to build first commercial wheelless passenger system

By Clifford Webb
Midland Industrial Correspondent

Britain has stolen a march on Japanese, German and American rivals competing in the £400m market for advanced passenger transit systems at airports, harbours, city centres and exhibition complexes.

Agreements were signed in Birmingham yesterday which will give this country the first fully automated, wheelless transit shuttle in commercial use.

The shuttle, costing £2.8m, will link Birmingham's new £45m airport terminal with the National Exhibition Centre and Birmingham International railway station. It will carry 27,000 passengers a year.

British Rail developed the shuttle's magnetic suspension system, known as Maglev, with a government contract more

than six years ago. Using linear motor propulsion and riding on a magnetic field, it was originally seen as a replacement for conventional trams.

There were technical limitations with high speed applications, however, which did not offer worthwhile advantages over conventional wheeled systems. But for short distances such as the 700 metres envisaged at Birmingham, there are obvious gains.

The system can be fully automatic with driverless cars making the 90-second journey at timed intervals or operating in response to passenger call buttons.

Birmingham will have three cars each capable of carrying 20 seated or 43 standing passengers. Cars will be in telephone communication with each other and a control centre. The

whole system will be monitored by closed circuit television, and will require only one or two operating staff.

BR claims that maintenance costs will be 75 per cent less than wheeled systems. Construction will start in three months' time, with commissioning in 1983 to permit a one-year running-in period before the system is opened to the public.

The project is being jointly undertaken by the West Midlands County Council and the People Mover Group (PMG), a consortium comprising Balfour Beatty Power Construction, GEC, Metro-Cammell and BR, which has been formed to exploit the Maglev development.

The county council is putting up £380,000; PMG £557,000; Department of Transport £500,000; Department of Industry £250,000 and British Rail £490,000.

Commitment to coal industry reaffirmed

By Nicholas Hirst

Mr David Howell, Secretary of State for Energy, yesterday strongly reaffirmed the Government's commitment to building up the coal industry.

He said that the 15,000 megawatt nuclear programme announced 14 months ago, which was attacked last week by an all-party select committee of MPs, should make a useful contribution to Britain's energy requirements in the 1990s and beyond.

Mr Howell said he was confident that the coal industry could deal sensibly with the problems created by the recession. "These short term difficulties, however, should not be confused with the longer term prospects which we believe argue well for the coal industry

as a whole", he told the British Institute of Management.

It is and always has been our desire to see a future coal industry which is strong, efficient and competitive."

The coal board had invested about £800m this year to equip the industry to meet requirements in the future when oil could become scarcer and demand for coal increase.

Computer aid for investors

By Kenneth Owen
Technology Editor

A computer-based method of putting those with inventions or ideas and those with the resources to exploit them in touch with each other was announced in London yesterday. Ideas and Resources Exchange (IREX), has been formed to provide the service which is claimed to be the first of its kind in the world.

For a minimum annual fee of £46, individuals and organizations can become "exchange members" of the scheme, which enables them to file brief descriptions of ideas, available skills and/or spare capacity on the system.

The other type of participant is that of "subscriber members", who for a minimum annual fee of £92 receive all the ideas, skills and capacities on file in five selected categories. Subscriber members will receive this information in the form of a monthly printout from the computer system.

Mr Edward Brech, chairman of IREX, said yesterday that, on conservative estimates, he was expecting that up to 3,000 members would be registered within the first year.

The nucleus of an IREX membership already existed in about 2,000 contacts which Mr Christopher Coles and Mr Michael Brecherton, who are among the founder-directors of IREX, had assembled in their earlier work on the exchange of ideas and of resources.

Sir Alexander Smith, director of Manchester Polytechnic, former head of advanced research for Rolls-Royce and one of the directors of IREX, said yesterday that the new company provided "a nursery, a clearing house, a marketplace, where the sellers and the buyers are people with ideas and people with resources".

IREX would bring the two together but would not try to determine the outcome of the meetings or of any subsequent transactions.

Mr Brech added that the company had been financed by about 40 individual investors.

Monetary policy and sterling

From Professor G. W. Maynard

Sir, Two interconnected arguments seem to be circulating in the City, both of which, strangely enough if press reports are to be believed, have received the support of the Prime Minister's personal economic adviser. The first is that the tightness or otherwise of monetary policy is best judged by the behaviour of the monetary base, which has increased very little over the last 12 months, rather than by the strength of sterling, which has little or nothing to do with North Sea oil, but is simply due to high real rates of interest in the United Kingdom. Both arguments must surely be wrong.

As for the first argument, if by monetary base is meant bankers' deposits at the Bank of England plus notes and coin in circulation, then changes in this variable have very little significance for overall monetary tightness or ease. Only the United Kingdom clearing banks have the obligation to keep deposits at the Bank of England, there being no requirement on other banks to do so.

This is far from a trivial point since London clearing bank deposits are less than half the total deposit liabilities of

the United Kingdom banking sector. Moreover, whereas in the case of the clearing banks, sterling deposit liabilities rose by about 12 per cent in the course of 1980 and their advances to public and private sectors plus holdings of gilts by about 23 per cent, in the case of the non-clearing banks the former rose by 22 per cent and the latter by almost 30 per cent. The non-clearing banks (ie, largely the overseas banks) financed more than half of the increase in their lending to United Kingdom public and private sectors with a greater than 50 per cent increase in their overseas held sterling deposits. Money may have been tight in the United Kingdom, but little support for that contention can be drawn from the behaviour of the so called monetary base.

As far as the real interest-exchange rate argument is concerned, it should be noted that sterling's exchange rate began to rise strongly at a time when real interest rates in the United Kingdom were, if anything, negative rather than positive, ie, in the early months of 1980. Real interest rates did rise during the year, particularly in the second half, but this was not because nominal interest rates rose but because the rate of inflation fell; and this was surely helped by the earlier

rise in the exchange rate. The existence of North Sea oil and the rise in oil prices in the course of 1979 can hardly be left out of this. Indeed, as far as monetary policy is concerned, the behaviour of overseas held sterling deposits mentioned above would suggest that far from contributing to the strength of the exchange rate, it operated to hold it down.

It will be ironic (although some might think welcome) if misunderstanding of what has been happening in the United Kingdom money and exchange markets causes a reputedly hard line monetarist adviser to recommend substantial easing of monetary policy. No doubt a substantial easing of fiscal and monetary policy aimed at rapid reversal of the unemployment situation would lead to a significantly lower nominal exchange rate. What is less certain is that it will lead to a significantly lower real exchange rate, at any rate for more than a very limited period of time.

Yours faithfully,
G. MAYNARD,
Department of Economics,
Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences,
University of Reading,
Whiteknights,
Reading RG6 2AA.

Progress through unity

From Mr D. G. Layton

Sir, I wish strongly to support the plea for unity by Mr John Wedgwood (chairman, Southern Electricity) which appeared at the head of the Business News Letters column on February 20. Mr Wedgwood pleaded, cogently, for an end to the division between those employed in the public and private sectors, and for a sense of joint purpose and mutual understanding between both sectors in seeking those improvements in performance across the field which are essential to the nation's recovery. How right he is.

At the head of these same columns on December 11, you were kind enough to print a letter from me (under an almost identical heading) which pleaded for a different kind of unity. I argued that our economic difficulties were due, in equal measures, to the shortcomings (past and present) of Governments (Conservative and Labour), trade unions and management. I ended by

saying that "the only hope is for Government, management and labour to get together in a united and determined effort to improve the United Kingdom industry's competitiveness in a period of almost unprecedented international (not merely national) slump".

Everything I have seen since then reinforces my own and Mr Wedgwood's views. It is particularly sad that the National Economic Development Council, which was very sensibly set up to facilitate a civilized exchange of views between government, management and labour with the object of formulating an agreed and viable national plan for recovery and prosperity, has become, instead, a battleground for the expression of entrenched and dogmatic views.

Yours faithfully,
D. G. LAYTON,
33 Cranbourne Avenue,
Eastbourne,
East Sussex BN20 7TS.
February 20.

Acid test for CCA accounting

From Mr T. K. Gribbin

Sir, Mr G. Wilson's letter on CCA accounting (February 16) was timely, particularly his restrained remarks about the United Kingdom lack of interest in LIFO (last in, first out).

The matter of replacement cost accounting is more pressing than he implies. I have been an ardent supporter of current cost accounting for many years. Further, I have tried to operate such a system within a large international company. My experience tells me that, alas, SSAP 16 is doomed to wither away under the assault of crude practicality.

The acid test in the next three years will be within the realm of management accounts. After all, only if it is found to be useful in running a business will any accounting system really be embraced by operational management.

There are two crucial management points which have to be faced:

a) can SSAP 16 be adapted for short-term internal reporting, ie, for monthly profits—and b) will the CCA results produced under SSAP 16 appropriately reflect commercial conduct?

In industries where raw material stocks are important and where prices fluctuate SSAP 16 fails both tests. For short-term reporting the cost of sales adjustment can easily swap the underlying profit movement. The result is confusion and potential loss of control. For longer term movements, as at present formulated, the SSAP 16 COSA can readily remove the benefits of previous good buying and could quite easily fail to penalize bad buying. Consequently it is wide open to manipulation.

All this makes it more urgent that attention is devoted to feasible alternatives such as LIFO.

There is an amazing lack of interest among United Kingdom accountants. After all, it is widely used in the United States and seems to work well.

This freeze on intellectual curiosity is directly attributable to the lack of response from the Inland Revenue. If it would indicate that it is willing to undertake a serious study, with interested parties on the practicality of using LIFO for taxing company profits this would transform the current debate. It would unblock the present intellectual log jam.

Yours faithfully,
T. K. GRIBBIN,
38 The Ridgeway,
London, NW11.

High levels of job losses still continuing

By Patricia Tisdall
Management Correspondent

There is still no sign of any easing of redundancy levels. About 45,000 more people are expected to be out of work because of redundancy in January, about the same number as in December, continuing the abnormally high level recorded since the summer according to the Department of Employment estimates.

The January total is nearly double that of the same month a year ago. The main industries affected during the month were iron and steel, other metal goods, textiles, construction and distribution. Together, these are estimated to have accounted for 37 per cent of the total.

Forward indicators also give no ground for any optimism that a drop in redundancy levels is in sight. The number of jobs supported by the Government's temporary short-time working compensation scheme, which encourages employers to introduce short-time working rather than cut jobs, increased from 595,000 at the end of December to 680,000 at the end of last month.

The scheme only subsidizes jobs for a limited period which was increased last November from six to nine months. Once the time limit runs out, many of the jobs under the scheme become vulnerable to redundancy.

Looking further ahead, the announcements of redundancies and job losses giving early warning of company intentions to reduce jobs also shows no signs of abating.

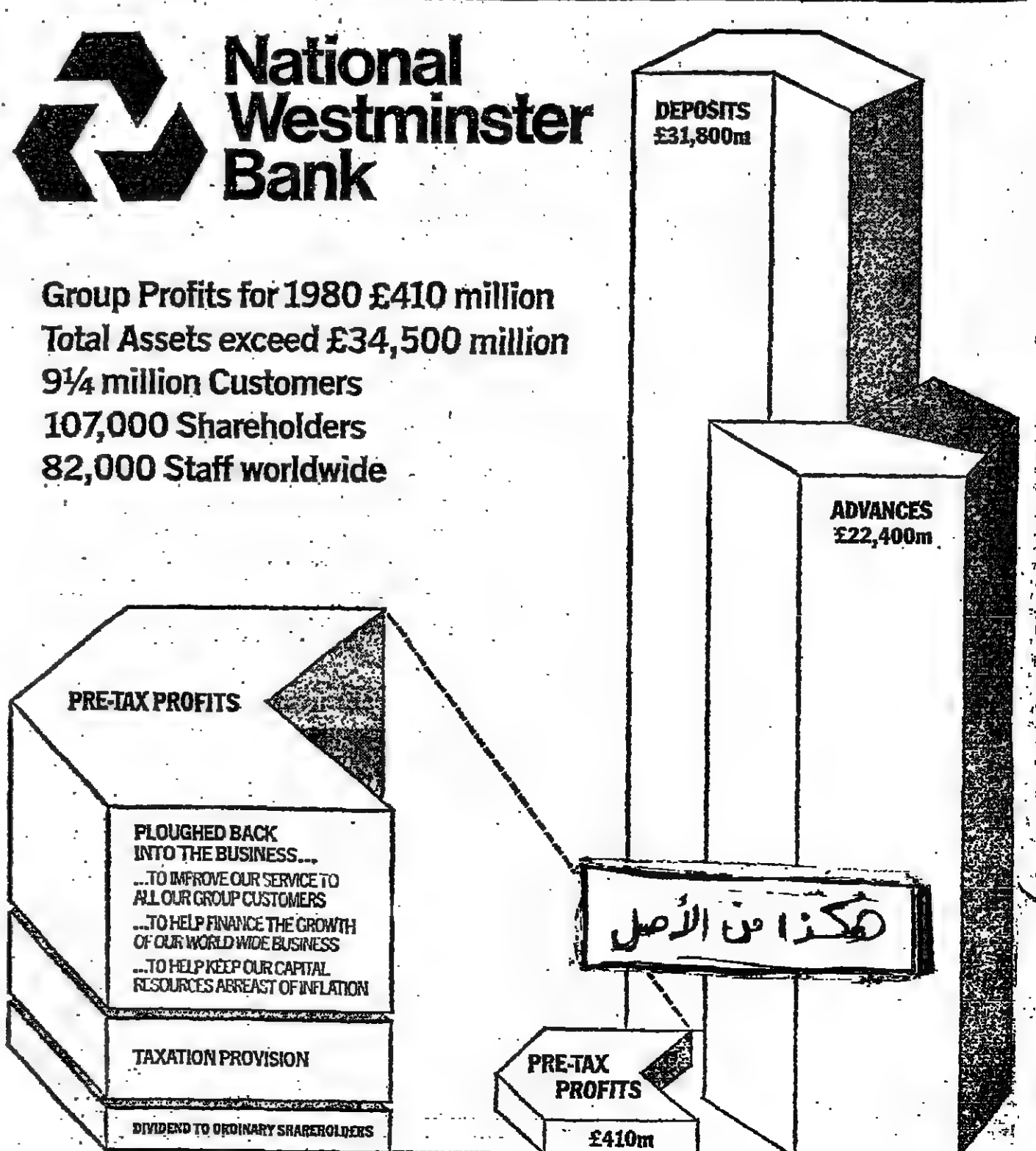
Among the biggest casualties announced during the month was the decision by Talbot UK to close its Linwood car plant which could involve the loss of 4,800 jobs.

This will not happen until June so the effects will not show up in official redundancy totals until the middle of the year.

REDUNDANCIES AND REDUCTIONS INVOLVING 100 OR MORE JOBS PUBLISHED DURING THE PAST MONTH

| Company and Product | Approx. No. affected | Main Location(s) |
|---|----------------------|--|
| Littlwoods | 250 | London, Greater Manchester, Liverpool |
| Alphacell | 100 | Newport, West |
| Delyn, packaging | 100 | Hempstead, Wales |
| Talbot Ricon | 525 | Coventry |
| BL Land-Rover | 400 | Solihull |
| Triplex (Pittington Glass) | 600 | Birmingham, St Helens |
| Reliance | 2,000 | |
| Standard Telephones & Cables | 450 | N Ireland |
| BTP Tealid | 350 | Billingham |
| Sunclift Battery | 300 | Near Wolverhampton |
| PK Nuclear Engineering | 240 | Belfast |
| BL Inter-Algeria kit packaging | 225 | Coventry |
| Vulcan Locomotive Works | 125 | Newtown le Willows |
| Eclipse tools (James Hall Group) | 100 | Stafford |
| GKN Sanket | 1,240 | Telford, Bolton |
| Seddon Atkinson International | 810 | Preston, Oldham |
| Harvesters US3 | 450 | Birmingham |
| Midland Red Bus Company | 450 | Nottingham, Sudbury, Earlsfield, Leics |
| Carrington Vitell, knitwear | 400 | Devon |
| Newtown Transmission cable plant | 400 | Devon |
| Wellworthy Engineering | 350 | Loughlin, Weymouth |
| Smiths, typewriters | 220 | By Greenwich, Glasgow |
| McCormac, specialist printing | 175 | Newtown le Willows |
| BSC Coking Ovens | 360 | Brackhausen, near Rotterdam |
| Longtin, Strake on Trent | 200 | Nottingham |
| Jorvis Capwood textile mill | 325 | Nottingham |
| GKN Screws and Fasteners | 325 | Nottingham |
| Amalgamated (Lifting Equipment) | 600 | Acton Cross, Birmingham |
| Ingersoll Rand Company | 450 | Trafford Park, Manchester |
| Talbot UK | 4,800 | Linwood, New Glasgow |
| Rolls-Royce Industrial & Marine division | 450 | Acton, Coventry |
| Rolls-Royce Motors | 350 | Warwick |
| Lucas Gearing, brakes | 450 | Wolverhampton, Cumbria |
| British Airways | 2,500 | |
| Lincolnshire school dinner workers | 1,500 | |
| British Sugar Corporation | 750 | Nottingham, Solby, Ely, Folstead |
| Times Newspapers | 563 | Henley-on-Thames |
| Dickinson Robinson, stationery | 320 | |
| Shell tanker drivers & distribution workers | 250 | |
| Lucas Diesel Engines | 200 | Gloucester |
| British Aero components | 200 | Warrick |
| Smith Meiers | 200 | London |
| Buxted Poultry | 180 | Manchester, Notts |
| Vehicle and Drewry, specialist vehicle hire | 150 | Letchworth, Herts |
| Bore Engineering, fork-lift trucks | 150 | Giltbrook, Nottingham |
| MP Bulmer, cidermaker | 115 | Nottingham |
| Powers County Council | 115 | |
| Kearney & Trecker Marine machine tools | 110 | Brighton |
| Warrington County Council | 110 | |
| Lee Group | 100 | Stafford |
| Morke H&H steel | 100 | Warrington |
| Doncaster County Council (school meals) | 100 | |
| Jacobs Manufacturing | 100 | Sheffield |
| Firth Brown, steel | 100 | Sheffield |
| Lucas Gearing, brakes | 700 | Wolverhampton, Cumbria |
| Metal Box | 700 | Nottingham, Solby, Ely, Folstead |
| Kraft Foods | 370 | Kirkby, near Liverpool |
| London Brick | 1,100 | Redditch, Beds |
| Laporte Industries | 500 | Stafford, Cheshire |
| British Vax Housen (Carrington Vitell) | 500 | Taunton |
| Bentley Catering | 150 | South London |
| Nottingham County Council | 150 | |
| Talbot (Tate & Lyle) | 120 | Kewley, Liverpool |
| Harlow | 120 | Newcastle, Cramlington |
| Fashion Industries | 100 | Hartlepool, Cleveland |
| Courtaulds | 1,900 | Liverpool, N Ireland |
| Dupont | 200 | South Wales |
| Optical | 200 | Preston, Lancs |

Source: The Times, The Sunday Times, The Financial Times, Jan 29-Feb 24.



BY THE FINANCIAL EDITOR

Nat West as an income stock

Sliding profits and sharply better dividends are driving bank shares into the income stock category. National Westminster Bank yesterday followed the precedent set by Lloyds Bank last week and raised its total dividend payments by 20 per cent.

Barclays is likely to follow suit but there is some doubt that Midland Bank will maintain the pattern because it is affected more than most by the quickly deteriorating banking scene.

The small fall in Natwest's profits before tax from £441m to £410m conceals the divergent experience within the business. The figures, slightly less than the more pessimistic market estimates, include a large fall in the domestic contribution in spite of a rising volume of deposits. Domestic banking last year made only £258m as against £325m in 1979.

Sterling deposits rose by 18 per cent overall but within that total current accounts fell by only 2 per cent while 7-day deposit accounts and wholesale deposits rose respectively by 37 and 24 per cent.

The net effect of that is that current accounts only represent 39 per cent of total assets compared to 45 per cent a year ago. In addition to higher funding costs the main other components of costs have been staff costs which are up by over 30 per cent and bad debts which in the United Kingdom are up from £19m to £36m.

While business was bad on domestic banking a strong performance on leasing has helped Lombard North Central, the wholly owned finance subsidiary to withstand some of the worse pressures on the business. More important even is that the value of equipment bought for leasing from £3m to £492m has certainly helped the total tax paid stay low at only 22 per cent of the total.

Things were distinctly brighter internationally though not quite as good in the second half as in the first when some extraordinary profits occurred.

Even though the National Bank of North America—which made last year's £12m on a 10m investment—continues to be disappointing the international business contribution to the total has risen from 22 per cent to 35 per cent and remains one of the better hopes for 1981.

The outlook for this year seems poor. Bad debts could start falling especially in the second half, but this is unlikely to offset the impact of lower interest rates and a fall in demand for loans. During the year, as far as Natwest will probably follow precedent and widen margins on lending, even this—with current accounts costing und 9 per cent to run—will not prevent a return.

But the shares at 360p now yield nearly 10 per cent and despite an unrealistic 10p tax p/e ratio a shade above 4 are active on income grounds, though there is no point in buying this side of what could be a difficult Budget for the clearers.

activities, accounts for the 7 point drop in the tax charge to leave net profits 17 per cent down at £76.5m.

What helped the shares gain 3p to 157p was the full 10 per cent rise in the final dividend after the jitters at the nine-month stage where the 9.8 per cent yield—and more important the prospect of steady dividend growth—is likely to outweigh worries about the profits outlook over the next couple of years.

Underwriting losses have ballooned in all areas except Holland with the total up from £21.3m to £57.3m. The drive for United States business is still the biggest drag with losses there jumping from £8.3m to £31.8m but CU is still adamant that the rise in claims and expenses which has resulted in a 2 point rise in the statutory operating ratio to 104.7 per cent is only a little worse than the United States industry average and is the price it has to pay to gain market share.

With this year's operating ratio likely to rise to 110 per cent, United States losses are likely to increase for at least the next year.

Elsewhere rate increases should help Canada this year while the recession at home could give the United Kingdom another hard year.

Last year's 17 per cent growth in premium income seems a hard target to beat this year and there is little chance of improving investment income offsetting further underwriting losses in 1981 and CU's profits look like going the wrong side of £100m.

Textiles Vantona rides the storm

The huge losses which the Dutch group Alcoa has been running up in its man-made fibres operations, where the problems caused by European overcapacity have been accentuated by United States imports, are evidence enough that some parts of the textiles industry are still under severe pressure. Indeed, today's results from Carrington-Vivella will add another gloomy reminder.

But there has been some bright spots. Nottingham Manufacturing yesterday, for example, and now Vantona, the household textiles and garment maker.

Vantona ended the year to November 30 with profits halved at £4.3m on volume down by about 15 per cent, which may not seem much cause for celebration. However the outturn was about £1m better than expected, and Vantona has benefited in the second half from cutting overheads.

The relative stability of the group's uniform business which suffered less than other parts of the group has also helped Vantona, but the more encouraging aspect of the results is that Vantona, like Nottingham Manufacturing, finished its year which tends to bear out the theory that the de-stocking phase of the textiles cycle is almost through.

Vantona, meanwhile, yielding 10.6 per cent with the shares up 8p to 106p, seems fairly optimistic about the second half of 1980-81 and with the benefit of cost-cutting should show at least a partial profits recovery this year.

Investors quickly took up what must have been a fairly sizable rump of the 1980 "tap" stock yesterday morning. But though long gilt prices made better progress there is little sign quite yet of real enthusiasm at the longer end of the market.

Meanwhile, the Bank further encouraged expectations of an early interest rate reduction by announcing a temporary cut in the banks' minimum reserve asset ratio, from 10 to 8 per cent, to run from March 2 to March 10. This releases additional liquidity of some £1,300m to cope with Petroleum Revenue Tax, but the authorities stressed that this has no implication for the general level of interest rates, nor for the proposed phasing out of the present reserve asset system.

Over and above liquidity needed for PRT payments—a fair chunk of which may in any case be paid for out of Certificates of Tax Deposit—the reduction in reserve assets may leave a little surplus liquidity around to cope with any fresh demand for gilts.

Certainly, there must be a strong case for the authorities tying up as much advance funding as possible before the Chancellor rises to make his Budget speech on March 10.

State industries—how generous are other governments?

Later today miners' leaders will join Sir Derek Ezra, chairman of the National Coal Board, in crucial talks with Mr David Howell, the Energy Secretary, about the details of the financial package which will be necessary to avoid open industrial conflict over the board's pit closure programme.

That the Government flinched from following through the implications of monetarist economic logic is now part of political history. Having so speedily recognized the clear dangers for the rest of the economy, even at the cost of appearing to bend its economic philosophy, it now must equally rapidly find a way of reducing the total net cost of its capitulation and of its repercussions in other sectors of industry.

The direct cost of the coal industry affair alone will be substantial. But this is not the first time that the Government has given way on the sensitive issue of external financing limits (EFLs), which it so rigorously set for the nationalized industries when it was returned to office.

Central to the economic strategy at that time was a massive turnround in the finances of the state industries. The Government envisaged that instead of being beneficiaries of loans and grants from the Exchequer totalling £2,300m in 1979-80 the public sector industries would by 1983-84 be making a net contribution to the Treasury of £400m (at 1979 survey prices).

That objective has now faded from view. The recession, which has been far more severe than ever expected, has knocked the finances of almost all the state industries badly off course.

Having been forced to recognize the impact of the recession, the Government has earmarked an extra £800m for the nationalized industries (excluding steel, which yesterday returned to the centre of political debate) in the coming financial year. Even these extra sums still place the nationalized industries in some difficulty. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has made it clear that they will have to secure savings of more than £1,000m in the course of the new financial year.

Mrs Thatcher's willingness at least to go some way towards defusing the NCB's problems has not surprisingly been seized upon as the nearest yet to a U-turn. But the trendily found that the over the past few months there has been a series of other perhaps less dramatic, but nevertheless significant, manoeuvres.

Even before the first year of her administration had ended the electricity supply industry was given an extra £300m when falling demand and rising fuel costs squeezed its cash flow. Since then there has been a queue of supplicants from the state sector. British Airways, faced with rising energy costs and falling business traffic

successfully sought and received an extra £85m on its external financing limit for the present financial year (1980/81).

British Rail, which last year was set an EFL of £750m, was also in the queue and, however reluctantly, the Government obliged Sir Peter Parker the BR chairman, by agreeing to increase the railway's limit by £40m.

Loss-making British Shipbuilders, faced with the continuing dearth of orders worldwide and the need to cut back its capacity and labour force, similarly found that the external financing limit of £120m set for it was unrealistic in the circumstances in which it had to compete for business.

In this case Sir Keith Joseph, the Secretary of State for Industry, provided a top-up of £65m.

The British Steel Corporation has provided the biggest test—become the largest single beneficiary of the Government's relaxation of external financing limits. It began the 1980/81 financial year with a limit of £450m, supplemented

by £121m, which the Government agreed could be rolled over from the previous year to cover bills which had gone unpaid because of the thirteen-week-long steel strike at the beginning of last year.

As the crisis subsequently deepened and imports flooded in, Sir Charles Villiers, the former chairman, was forced to put out his begging bowl. At first Sir Keith demurred, insisting that vigorous internal economies should be undertaken by the new chairman, Mr Ian MacGregor. Then, done, BSC still needed extra cash.

Sir Keith then obliged. The corporation got another £400m at the end of last year, reflecting the pressure on the corporation's cash, the EFL was yesterday extended still further.

All the extra payments made to the nationalized industries in the present financial year have been financed from the Contingency Reserve.

In providing the extra cash for the BSC (to the chairman of the private sector) the Government has tacitly accepted the inevitability of adding to the proliferation of subsidies which characterize the entire European steel industry—and indeed, other strategically important industries, including coal.

The fact is that subsidies of one form or another are a significant ingredient of European industry. It is with some justification that both the National Union of Mineworkers and the NCB can claim further assistance.

In the United Kingdom the BSC received total state aid between 1974 and 1979 amounting to £3,176m, made up of a mixture of public dividend capital, National Loans Fund money, grants under the Iron and Steel Act and foreign loans. In France the restructuring package set in train for the

steel industry will involve possibly even more, with some estimates of at least £3,483m.

Other European governments have been equally indulgent. In Belgium the total call on state funds is likely to rise to about £1,700m, with a slightly lower sum involved in the re-organization of the state-owned Italian steel industry.

Even in West Germany North Rhine Westphalia will be involved in providing upwards of £1,600m over the next five years towards measures related to steel industry reorganization.

Studies carried out for British Rail have shown that the United Kingdom network receives less support from public funds than its European neighbours. Detailed investigations three years ago (which still hold broadly true) revealed that Britain received subsidies for its railway of 29 per cent of total railway costs, including investment. But West Germany received 39 per cent of costs, The Netherlands 50 per cent and Italy 68 per cent.

Sir Derek Ezra will undoubtedly take into his talks with Mr Howell the comparisons which the NCB has made of direct subsidies which other EEC Governments make to their coal industries. Excluding social costs, total direct aid to the West German industry in 1979 amounted to £1,386m. In France it was £334m, in Belgium £208m and in the United Kingdom £189m in the financial year 1979-80.

So, in comparison with what is received by their counterparts in Europe, the extra sums which the National Coal Board and the National Union of Mineworkers will be requesting today, appear puny.

Peter Hill and Frances Williams

Production subsidies* to European coal industry

| | £ per tonne |
|------------|-------------|
| BELGIUM | 34 |
| FRANCE | 18 |
| W. GERMANY | 15 |
| UK | 1½ |

*Excluding social grants and Government contributions to pension funds.
Source: National Coal Board.
Figures relate to 1979.

The search for sound money

'It looks as if the Government will persist with sterling M3 for targeting purposes for the moment. Greater emphasis will be laid on the need to look at other indicators and there will at some stage be a new official monetary series on M2'

Issue has been the continuing suitability of sterling M3 as the Government's leading indicator for monetary targeting. Sterling M3 is the broad measure of banking money, taking in notes and coin in circulation together with residents' sterling bank deposits.

Specific criticisms of sterling M3 are generally threefold. It is argued that it is heavily inflated by the impact of the high nominal interest charges added to customers' accounts by the banks; that it is swollen by the tendency of savers to increase the proportion of their savings held as liquid deposits when interest rates are high; and that it is further swollen by the fact that public sector domination of the long-term savings market means that the banks have little choice but to expand their balance sheets to accommodate heavy corporate sector borrowings.

That does not automatically make sterling M3 a redundant indicator, however. What it does do is call for careful interpretation of sterling M3 and emphasize the need to read the other monetary gauges too.

More seriously, perhaps, it suggests that there are potential problems in using sterling M3 as a strict guide to the desirable level of nominal gross domestic product growth in any one year, and perhaps as a guide to a sensible level for pay settlements.

On the other hand, other monetary measures are almost equally susceptible, in one direction or another, to the changing level of interest rates, and it would be wrong to write off sterling M3 as being notably less useful than any other indicator.

For a start, it reflects the fact that in a period of high interest rates the potential nominal spending power of savers is being rapidly increased. Moreover, one should not lose sight of the fact that high interest rates are an essential factor in the mechanism of the disinflationary squeeze.

For the moment it looks as if the Government will probably persist with sterling M3 for targeting purposes. But greater emphasis will, of course, be laid on the need to look at other indicators, whether narrower or broader, and there will at some stage be a new official monetary series on M2 retail money—basically the money holdings of potential consumers.

Just how quickly this new series will start is not yet clear. There is still some definitional and technical work to be done, particularly in the area of deciding what to do about corporate sector money and how to identify, from the statistics available, what can be classified as personal as opposed to small business cash holdings.

As the Government looks for greater flexibility in its use of the various monetary measures, however, it at once creates a potential problem of credibility. One of the great problems of the monetarist approach has

been that it has been presented as a very simple and mechanistic doctrine, when most monetary economists would strongly argue that it is really no such thing.

But once you start telling people that it is no such thing, and once words like flexibility start to creep in, financial markets, whose cynicism has often been right in the past, start to get nervous.

The quick pro quo, then, for flexibility at one end of the spectrum has to be that the Government is going to make a better job in future of actually keeping the monetary aggregates on a suitably tight rein.

Already the banking "corset" has been buried. Next to go will probably be the present, technically deficient, reserve asset system. That will leave us with a cash system of sorts with the emphasis increasingly laid on controlling the monetary base—usually defined as notes and coin in circulation together with the banks' till cash and cash balances with the central bank: in other words, the liabilities' side of the central bank's own balance sheet.

The crucial element here is the banking sector's cash deposits at the Bank of England. Either by requiring banks to keep a specified proportion of their liabilities in such a form, or by assuming that banks will maintain a reasonably stable proportion of their liabilities in such a form out of prudential considerations, the Bank will start to concentrate on open market operations designed to control the size of this cash base. In this way it will hope to regulate the banks'

liabilities that make up the bulk of the money supply.

The big questions on which the authorities will have to pronounce in moving in this direction concern the nature of the cash ratio, the interest to be paid on banking deposits at the central bank and the size and definition of the pool of assets that a banking system will be allowed to run into cash to deal with the large daily ebb and flow of money between the private sector and the Government.

Some of these elements may become clearer at budget time, but the authorities have already made it clear that they intend to move through a process of evolutionary rather than overnight change and that their eventual destination has not yet been determined.

However fast or slowly the authorities proceed in the direction of a monetary base system, two areas where they are already moving are on interest rate flexibility and improving the methods of funding the public sector borrowing requirement.

The former involves two main elements, namely, more flexibility in open market operations and the depoliticizing of short-term interest rates. How soon minimum lending rate can be phased out remains to be seen, but it seems a reasonable bet that it will disappear before the present cyclical downturn in interest rates is over.

As far as funding goes, the Government has already moved to tap far more aggressively the fast growing personal sector surpluses. It may well decide that it will also be worth trying a short-dated Treasury bill—to tap the more liquid parts of the corporate sector and the building societies.

The more interesting question, however, is how quickly it will react in its market operations if the financial climate starts to move against it at some stage over the coming months.

John Whitmore

Business Diary: Bishop of British Midland

so pervasive an industry British airlines have, with exception of Sir Freddie, come up with next to well-known names.

There is Adam Thomson, of course, but you would have to be head of BCal to be him.

Low, however, Michael is coming up on the side to make his mark with travelling public. The chairman and managing director of British Midland Airways, is trying to make a name for himself by underwriting British Airways and al on the shuttle between London Heathrow, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Bishop, who is only 38, is much younger than the Derby-based independent line having bought out sister Assets interests three years ago. He joined British Midland in 1965 as station manager at Manchester and took his way up through the aviation under the Minister of Transport to become managing director and deputy chairman.



"After announcing the closure of 50 pits, then 25, then none at all, would not the next logical step in placating the miners be the naming of 25 or more absolutely new pits?"

His biggest coup of that period was to fly to South Africa to buy, for peanuts, a fleet of Viscount airliners which the airline operates to this day alongside more modern DC9s, although he will have to take a big, and expensive, decision on reequipment in the near future.

Unlike Sir Freddie, Bishop is a retiring character but, like the champion of private enterprise aviation, he has strong views on the place of the independents.

Announcing his application to the Civil Aviation Authority yesterday, Bishop said: "First, we believe that the time has come for an independent airline such as ours to be given access to the high volume trunk routes in this country."

He is offering lower fares as well as bars and inflight catering.

Edgar Wille and Valerie Hammond have come to what is to me a surprising conclusion—that computers are good for you.

Wille is head of management development at the National Coal Board and Hammond a member of the Women and Management project team at Ashbridge Management College.

They have collaborated on a book, *The Computer in Personnel Work* (£5.55), for the Institution of Personnel Management and say that even in security matters the computer is all right with them.

"The computer, by requiring the keying in of the correct password, can also act as a safeguard against unauthorized passing of information," they

says, adding: "It is perhaps easier to gain access to paper records than to files to computerized personnel records."

But Wille and Hammond do not say anything about the authorized passing on of information by the employer.

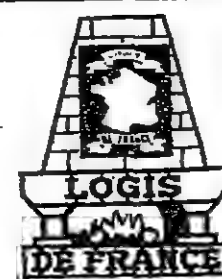
Ron Hickman, the British inventor of the Black and Decker Workmate workbench, has just spent more than \$1m in the courts to win against the world's biggest retailer, Sears Roebuck, which was found to have infringed Hickman's patents.

Hickman is now back home in Jersey after the three-week court case in Baltimore. His Jersey-based company, Tekron International, and the United States manufacturers, Black and Decker, accused Sears Roebuck of breaking Workmate patents by producing a similar workbench called the Workbuddy.

Hickman says he won "hands down". He is now waiting for the judge to decide on damages and says that the patents on the Workmate have been proved for the first time in the United States and this would prevent other manufacturers from moving in.

Sears, Hickman says, turned down an offer to license Workmate nine years ago because it would not sell on the American market.

Tekron International, which Hickman set up when he moved from the United Kingdom four years ago, has premises on a Jersey trading estate. It employs 17 people and is working on 20 different inventions.



The fireplace logo above is that of what the French claim to be the world's largest hotel association, the Logis et Auberges de France. The president, Julien Nicolle, was in London yesterday to launch the annual guide.

The fire symbolizes hospitality, but Nicolle told me that he and the federation have booted no less than 248 members into the flames over the last five years for failing to keep up standards, 58 last year alone.

Were they allowed to return after their ousting? "Theoretically yes," he said. Nicolle, who is mayor of Mont St Michel and owner of the Hotel de Guesclin there, says the federation now has 4,300 hotels in membership offering 70,000 rooms.

The federation grew up after the war as a means of getting family-run hotels back onto their feet.

The good news about the guide is that it is free, save 50p in postage stamps from the French National Tourist Office here. The bad news is it is in French.

Ross Davies

Medminster Limited Furniture Hire, Shipping and Freight Agents

The Group has experienced buoyant trading for the six months and this is illustrated by an enhanced dividend.

FURNITURE HIRE

We have, since November, been in the process of refurbishing the additional Warehouse the Furniture Group is opening in Manchester and equipping the interior with racking and modern furniture handling equipment. I did also point out that the furniture divisions would carry the burden of the extra overheads while equipping this property and transferring our vast stock from the present premises to the new location, which may possibly take another full year.

It should be recalled that Camden Furniture Hire (CFH), which was only recently relocated on the Western Avenue, has been, and is, highly successful. It is therefore our intention to install a CFH division alongside our existing company, Gibbets, when the property in the north is ready.

24th February, 1981

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During the half year, the Group has increased its permanent cash position by some 25%, and cash balances currently stand at something in excess of £200,000.

JOHN DELANEY Chairman

| Six months ended | 1980 | 1979 |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------|
| 31st Dec: | £ | £ |
| Turnover | 5.2m | 5.1m |
| Profit before taxation | 165,811 | 105,424 |
| Profit after taxation | 102,811 | 66,924 |
| Interim Dividend per share (net) | 1.5p | 1.1p |

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We know that it's just not possible for many senior secretaries to come in to see us during the working day but tomorrow, Thursday, February 26, we're staying open till 7 in the evening. Either ring us about our wide range of satisfying jobs, both permanent and temporary, in London and overseas, or look in your own way home tomorrow for a drink and a chat about the opportunities, fringe benefits and promotion prospects.
Senior Secretaries,
Recruitment Consultants,
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Arts Council OF GREAT BRITAIN

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We send our computerised CVs in regular contact with over 1,000 companies in London who employ bilingual people—some of whom give us their jobs exclusively—jobs then which you want find anywhere else. And we made registering very simple—just ring for an application form, return it to us and from then on you will automatically be matched against our current jobs and opportunities. Reporting to the Operations Director this role is a linchpin in the organisation and a good salary will be paid for the right candidate.
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MCL

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London, S.W.6.

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From £6,000 + plus all BANKING BENEFITS
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Box 2428 F, The Times.

Property

Advantages of converted old mansions

Last week I noted the advantages in room size and proportions offered by sections of old country mansions converted into smaller units. An added advantage arises when the original building is of outstanding architectural merit and provides a setting on a scale beyond normal domestic expectations.

One such conversion is Marlton Park, near Malmesbury, Wiltshire. It is a Jacobean house, built in 1670, and designed by the younger Bretingham, and has a grade one listing as being of special architectural or historic interest.

One notable feature is the great hall, originally an entrance hall, which is a central courtyard enclosed by the Georgian alterations, and painstakingly restored from the main entrance hall. The conversion of the building provides a total of 18 units, comprising flats, maisonettes

and tower houses, ranging from one to four bedrooms.

Many of the rooms have retained their Jacobean or Georgian characteristics. Around the house there are common grounds of 25 acres, and some of the ground floor units have small private gardens. Leases of 99 years are being offered at prices between £58,000 and £105,000. Information can be obtained from Period and Country Houses, Limited, 61 Harcourt Terrace, London SW10 9JP.

The Old House, Blandford Forum, Dorset, also has a grade one listing, although on a much smaller scale. It is believed to be one of the oldest houses in the town and one of the relatively few to have survived the widespread fires which swept the town in the early part of the eighteenth century.

It seems to have been built between 1650 and 1670 by a German doctor who practised in the area. It is brick built, but has a pair of unusual decorative chimney stacks which emerge from the roof ridges.

Some alterations were made in the nineteenth century. The accommodation is extensive and includes a reception hall, two other reception rooms, an extensive basement with store rooms and a wine cellar, a main bedroom suite and six further bedrooms. Behind there is a walled garden. Offers about



Charlton Park, near Malmesbury, Wiltshire, now providing 18 separate homes.

£85,000 are being asked through Savills' Wiltshire office.

In the same part of the country is The Old Malhouse, in Marlborough, near Marlborough, Wiltshire. This too, dates basically from the middle of the seventeenth century, with additions made at the end of the eighteenth century and later. It has stone walls, partly colour washed, and a tiled roof.

Accommodation in the main part of the house includes two reception rooms, a study, a

main bedroom, bathroom and dressing room suite, together with six further bedrooms and another two bathrooms. More space is provided in a self-contained annexe or leisure wing.

This is on two floors with the main part of the ground floor given over to a single large room nearly 27ft long and more than 18ft wide, and a sauna and shower room, with a large games room and a studio above. The garden covers about two acres

and the property is for sale at about £100,000 through Pearsons, of Salisbury.

An even older property is The Stone House, in Steyning, Sussex, in which the huge flint walls of the base structure, some three feet thick, are thought to be early fourteenth century. Apart from the church, it is thought to be the oldest property in the town. Additions and alterations have, of course, been made over the years, but a feature is a fine closely-timbered overhanging

gable which may also be of medieval origin.

The house is in the High Street, likely to be relieved of much traffic when the by-pass is opened this summer, and has a fairly large garden and a garage. It has a large reception hall, two reception rooms and a sun room, as well as a roomy basement.

Upstairs there are four bedrooms, a dressing room and two bathrooms. The asking price is about £85,000, through Churchman Burt and Son, of Steyning.

In the tradition of its locality is The Old Manor House, at Alford, Surrey, an old Wealden farmhouse with some interesting early architectural features. It was built as a medieval hall house about the middle of the sixteenth century, but two studded bays and an unusually large inglenook were added in the seventeenth century.

The construction is part timber framed, and partly of brick with tile hanging to the upper part, and the house has a grade two listing. There are two main reception rooms, a large study or family room, and four bedrooms. Outbuildings include a modern garage and stable block, and two fields total about three-and-a-half acres. The price is £125,000 and the agents are Weller Eggar, of Cranleigh, Surrey.

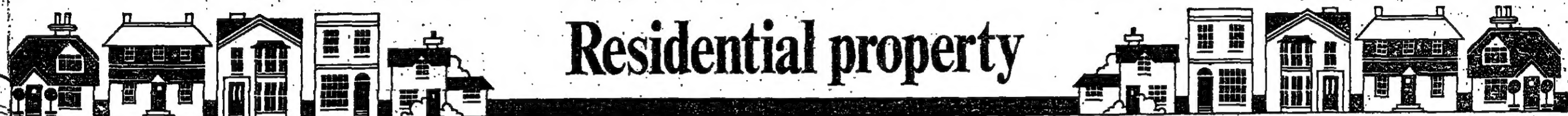
Toppsfield Mill House, at Hadleigh, Suffolk, was a mill house for a nearby water mill,

now demolished. The house is probably about 150 years old and is built of brick with a slate roof. Although looking over fields at the rear, it is only a short distance from the centre of the town. Accommodation includes two reception rooms, a good-sized cellar with access from the entrance hall, suitable for use as a games room, and four large bedrooms. Various outbuildings are grouped around a courtyard and the garden runs to about a quarter-of-an-acre. The price is £53,000 and the agents are Abbotts, of Ipswich.

A country house in the local style is Southfield, at Egerton, near Ashford, Kent. It is believed to date from the seventeenth century, but to have been refaced in the Georgian style later in the eighteenth.

The walls are mainly brick on a ragstone base with some tiling, and the house has a grade two listing. Accommodation includes four reception rooms, a conservatory, a main bedroom, bathroom and dressing room suite, plus another four bedrooms and bathroom. Outbuildings include an extensive barn complex within its own walled enclosure, which provides garaging, a workshop and a large first-floor room. The whole property covers about two acres and is for sale at about £110,000 through Braxtons, of Tunbridge Wells.

Gerald Ely



Residential property

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COUNTRY PROPERTIES

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